

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

September 6
Sunday - 9:30am

Starting
September 13
Sunday - 8:30am
& 11:00am
Sunday school
9:45am

Summertime often means quieter days around the church office. Now, the school year is in session and the church program year is beginning. The resumption of Confirmation classes, Sunday School, and musical group rehearsals means that we'll once again have more people in and out of the church building throughout the week. There have been people around all summer, of course – Wednesday Bible study, weekend worship, outside groups using space for trainings and meetings, the Quilters and the Counters and the Caller-mailing helpers... we've hosted two weddings, two funerals, some birthdays and other gatherings of families and friends.

But as we turn the page on the planning calendar to September, the boxes that mark each day seem to get more crowded. It's important for me (and for all of us) to remember that being the Church is about more than tasks accomplished, meetings attended, sermons preached or heard, songs selected or sung; and also more than the things that happen inside our walls. The Church is, first and foremost, a place built upon relationship. The Church (in Greek *ekklesia*) is literally "the ones called out."

As I wrote last month, Confirmation will look different this year, as we collaborate with Emanuel and Our Savior's, with a rotating schedule of location, event (classes, service projects, and fellowship), and leader (me, Pastor Cara, Pastor Doug). This will, I hope, provide our Confirmation youth, families, and mentors with a renewed perspective on how we, "The Church" (*all* of God's people), are called to function not just inside, but also outside of "our church" (*our* congregation and *our* building).

Many of our congregation's members are already engaged in ministries that exist in our community, such as the Care and Share Food and Clothing Pantry; and others are helping develop and plan new ministries such as our Blessing Box and the Community Fridge projects opening at 4 locations around Council Bluffs over the course of the next year or two. The reality is that any work *you* do in serving our community is *our church* at work, because you are – we are – the Church together! Consider growing that togetherness by inviting church friends to serve alongside you around the community.

In addition to our Confirmation collaboration, we have an upcoming opportunity to experience "The Church" as both inside and outside the walls of "our church." On Wednesday, **October 28**, we will be hosting a group of young students from Uganda as they proclaim a message of God's love for all. The Watoto Choir (*Watoto* is the Kiswahili word for "children"). We will have a meal and program that evening, and then have an opportunity to host 1-2 of the kids and an adult chaperone (called "uncle or aunt") in our homes for the night. If you have a spare bedroom, futon, or air mattress, you could get to know some of God's beloved children from another part of the world! An FAQ about hosting is included in the newsletter (pg. 5), and more details can be shared with interested families. The basics are that you provide a bed and bedding, breakfast, a packed lunch, and transportation from church to home and back to church in the morning.

Please mark your calendars with that date, and also with **October 10th-11th**, when we will be celebrating the retirement of the debt incurred in renovating and expanding our building. The official meeting will be Saturday, October 10th after worship and will include a full meal. On Sunday, October 11th, we'll have a small reception between services to mark the occasion. Fulfilling the financial obligations incurred in our building expansion means that we can turn our focus from debt repayment to further investment in our relationships with neighbors, organizations, and ministries in our community. I'm excited to be sharing this moment with you all, and to be sharing many moments to come as together, we seek to Hear the Word, Live the Word, and Share the Word.

Blessings, *Pastor Luke*

SWEEPIN' SUNDAE

will be held on Sunday, September 20!

Help clean our Adopt-A-Street stretch starting at 12:15pm. All the tools needed for cleanup will be provided. Following the cleaning; return to the church to enjoy an Ice Cream Sundae bar. Sign up on the board outside the FLC.

This is a fun fellowship opportunity to help beautify our community!



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



JOIN US

for a CELEBRATION DINNER!
Including a congregational meeting with a vote to retire our debt (7:15pm).

Sunday, October 11 there will be a small reception between services.

PLEASE RSVP for the DINNER by 9/28



We are looking for Sunday school subs to help fill in when our teachers are out. If you are interested let Jessica Weltz know. Everything is supplied for you. 402-515-2374 Jessica.weltz.fam5@gmail.com



High school students will be meeting on Wednesdays, at 6:30pm with Kyle.

* Mark your calendars: Next summer is a National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis June 28—July 2, 2027

Rally Day for Sunday school for Pre-K - 5th graders will be on **Sunday, Sept. 13** between services.

- ⇒ Meet your teachers
- ⇒ See your classroom
- ⇒ make a Sunday school bag
- ⇒ Bounce House
- ⇒ Bubbles & Chalk outside



Confirmation

Kick-Off Cook-Off

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

First Class on Wednesday, Sept. 9 at 6:30pm.



No experience required, all are welcome!



Praise Team practice will start on Tuesday, September 1 at 7:00pm



You don't have to know how to sing to join the Bell Choir! See what it's all about on Wednesday, September 9 at 6:30pm



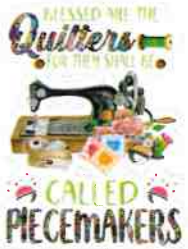
Chancel Choir rehearsals will start on Wednesday, September 9 at 7:30pm



September Book: *The Dressmakers of London*
by **Julia Kelly**

Discussion date:
September 24 at 9:15am

The book selection for October will be *Molly* by our very own, Edie Goodwin



"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, September 16, 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.



Sept. 5 & 6

Cookie Johnson
Becky Taylor
Kim Pace
Diane Hartman

Sept. 12 & 13

Joyce Mlynarik
Becky Smith
Alan Meilike
Margaret Schneider
Norma Jones



Sept. 19 & 20

Carolyn Clark
Sandy Cerveny
Ruby Runte
Sue Coe
Barby James

Sept. 26 & 27

Elaine von Gillern
Carol Wood
Andrea Hill
Patricia Minchin



* Esther Group—
Sept. 8 at 9:30am
* Mary Group—
Sept. 10 at 9:00am

Women of the Church meeting: September 28 at 9:30am



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 September 17



Ready for a good time!

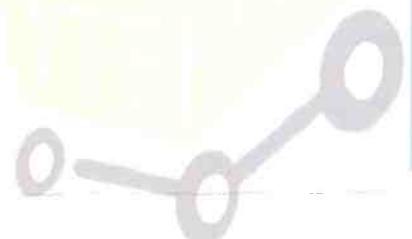
Good Time Group will meet on Friday, September 11 at 5:30pm at the Twisted Tail (2849 335th St, Logan, IA (formerly Beebeetown)). Please RSVP by calling or texting Becky H. 402-689-1669 by afternoon of Sept. 8



Players will meet on Friday, September 4 at 5:00pm at the Olive Garden. Please RSVP to Lois Adams 712-322-0655.



We are requesting donations of **mac 'n cheese**





Relentlessly DEDICATED TO SERVING IOWA FAMILIES.

AT LSI, WE ARE FUELED BY THE POWER OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT AND DRIVEN TO CREATE STRONGER IOWA COMMUNITIES.

Our work isn't done until every Iowa child has a safe, loving home; until every individual struggling with mental illness has access to quality therapy; until every former refugee feels welcome in their new home; until every Iowan with a disability has the independence they need to thrive.

As one of Iowa's most trusted human services agencies, LSI has a legacy of serving children and families for more than 150 years. With more than 1,000 team members in 30 offices statewide, Team LSI stands united, ready to tackle the difficult issues facing our most vulnerable neighbors.

"The people at LSI are the ones to help you through the times when you don't know what to do."
—Brittany, an Iowa mom

Customized Care

FOR IOWA CHILDREN, ADULTS, AND FAMILIES.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INTERVENTION SERVICES to support children with emotional or behavioral disorders through regular in-home visits and provide their families with practical skills like anger management and healthy communication.

FAMILY SAFETY AND CRISIS SERVICES to provide intensive interventions designed to strengthen families and prevent child removal due to abuse or neglect.

REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT SERVICES to empower refugees and immigrants with English classes, economic development programs, and family support.

RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT SERVICES to provide Iowa's most vulnerable children and teens with 24-hour trauma-centered mental health care.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES for parents of young children. Our programs support Iowa families with home visiting, classes, and parenting education.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES for children, adults, and families in a compassionate, non-judgmental therapeutic environment.

FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION to recruit, license, and support foster and adoptive families in western Iowa.

SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES include 24-hour and hourly care and Host Homes independent living respite care for Iowa children and adults with high intellectual or developmental disabilities.



Give online at lsiowa.org/donate



LSI is affiliated with Lutheran Services in America and the three Iowa synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. LSI is nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation.

[LSIowa.org](https://lsiowa.org) | [Facebook.com/LSIiowa](https://facebook.com/LSIiowa)

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.



LUNCH & LEARN AT BETHANY HEIGHTS

Empowering Your Future with Knowledge & Care

Date: September 2nd, 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: August 3rd, 2026

Call: 712-328-8228

Email: activitiesbh@blhs.care

Join us as Jessica Duncan, Certified Dementia Practitioner with Angels Care Home Health on:

Walk in Their Shoes: Dementia Simulation & Education

Step into the world of dementia through an interactive simulation and educational presentation. Gain a deeper understanding of the daily challenges individuals living with dementia face, learn effective communication strategies, and discover ways to provide compassionate, person-centered support. Whether you're caring for a loved one or simply want to learn more, this experience will leave you with greater empathy, insight, and practical knowledge.

POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY

SENIOR RESOURCE FAIR

SPONSORED BY:

RESOURCES . SUPPORT . COMMUNITY

Join us for the County Senior Resource Fair! Explore valuable resources, services, and programs designed to support older adults, caregivers, and families. Meet local providers, gather information, ask questions, and discover tools to help you age well and stay connected in our community.

9:00am - 12:00pm
3rd September, 2026

St. John Lutheran Church
633 Willow St. Council Bluffs, IA

Contact us for more information
712-256-7802 or mkt@blhs.care

FREE ENTRY!

Benefit:

- Connect with Local Experts
- Discover Available Experts
- Get Your Questions Answered
- Plan for the Future
- Build Community Connections

Vendor Cost: \$20 all proceeds go to the Alzheimer's Association

Saint John Lutheran Church



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 9:30am Worship	31	1 7:00pm Praise Team starts	2 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Confirmation Kickoff Cookoff at Emanuel 6:30pm Youth Group	3 9:00am Pott. Co. Senior Resource Fair 7:30pm CMA Meeting	4 5:00pm Players Group	5 Communion 5:30pm Worship
6 Communion 9:30am Worship	7 Labor Day Office Closed	8 9:30am Esther Group 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	9 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell Choir starts 6:30pm Confirmation class 6:30pm Youth Group 7:30pm Chancel Choir Starts	10 9:00am Mary Group 6:30pm Card Club 7:30pm CMA Meeting	11 5:30pm Good Time Group	12 5:30pm Worship
13 8:30am Worship 9:45am Rally Day - 1st day of Sunday school 11:00am Worship	14	15 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	16 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am Quilting Group 6:30pm Bell choir 6:30pm Confirmation class 6:30pm Youth Group 7:30pm Chancel Choir	17 11:30am Men's Club 7:30pm CMA Meeting	18	19 Communion 5:30pm Worship
20 Communion 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday school 11:00am Worship 12:15pm SWEEPIN' SUNDAE	21	22 7:00pm Church Council 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	23 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am Kitchen - Cleaning Crew - come and join us! 6:30pm Bell choir 6:30pm Confirmation class 6:30pm Youth Group 7:30pm Chancel Choir	24 9:15am Book Club 6:30pm Card Club 7:30pm CMA Meeting	25	26 5:30pm Worship
27 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday school 11:00am Worship	28 9:30am Women of the Church meeting - open to all	29 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	30 <i>Caller Mailed</i> 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell choir 6:30pm Confirmation class 6:30pm Youth Group 7:30pm Chancel Choir	1 7:30pm CMA Meeting	2	3 Communion 5:30pm Worship

Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Elora Simpson Becky Wegner	2 Becky Krauel-Henkel	3 Addilyn Schneider	4 Malachi Hansen	5 Zoey Johnson Angela Nelson Colton Pestel Levi VanderMeulen
6 Rachel Kuenzli	7 Sandy Cerveny Nick DelSignore Judith Fox-Schwabauer Grant McCool Gloria Olson Jack Pope Joyce Steppuhn	8 Jeremiah Kuenzli Lindsay Traeger	9 Phil Hansen Anna Roane	10	11 Jill Applegate	12 Katie Warner
13 Thomas Graham Todd Hayes	14 Mary Burmeister Timothy Cash, Jr.	15 Evan Nano Diane Welch	16 Megan Eledge Jason Maas Dallis Thompson Rebecca Thompson Darren Warner	17 Garry Malskeit Ava Saar	18 Pamela Pick	19 Joan Hicks
20 Mary Lou Burke Chloe Conahan Diane Walters	21 Richard Heininger Sonya Weltz	22 Beth Matters Tracy Simpson	23 Sydney Frush Tim Means	24 Andrea Hill Pam Wilson	25 Rob Riggs	26 Abrams Alderton Ellie Saar
27	28	29 Maggie McCool	30 Valerie Moore Jeanne Trachta			





*Celebrating
-WITH-
you*

85th Birthday

Judy Fox-Schwabauer (Sept. 7)

93rd Birthday

Jack Pope (Sept. 7)

64th Anniversary

Gary & Sandy Bronson
(Sept. 2)



IN OUR
Thoughts and Prayers

Sympathy to the families of...

Kristi Koopmeiners

Gerry Hill, aunt of Art Hill

Mark Lamers and Larry Lamers,
brothers of Cindy Knauss



Watoto Choir: Frequently Asked Host Home Questions

Q: Does anyone on the team have food allergies?

A: There are no known allergies on the team.

Q: What do they like to eat?

A: The team is grateful and will eat any type of meal provided. Please keep nutrition in mind when preparing meals. They generally love chicken, beans and rice, but also enjoy experiencing new foods and American cuisine. Fruit such as bananas, oranges, and apples are great options.

Q: Do they need to eat following the concert?

A: Offering a light snack or meal is welcomed, as some team members may be hungry after the concert. Feel free to ask your group.

Q: Do they have a cooler on the bus for bagged lunches?

A: They have a cooler that is used for drinks but not for sack lunches.

Q: What are appropriate sleeping arrangements?

A: We ask that every adult has their own bed, but children are able to share any bed larger than a twin. Blow-up mattresses, pull-out couches, and futons are welcome. Choir members are not used to cold weather, so please provide additional blankets as needed.

Q: Are pets ok?

A: Ugandans are not used to having pets in their home. Some children might be apprehensive around pets. Please be sensitive to this cultural difference if hosting a child who may be nervous around your pet.

Q: What time should I drop my group off at the church the next morning?

A: A common time is between 8:00am - 9:00am. Please be flexible as timing can vary. The team leader will confirm a time when calling the coordinator, a week before the concert.

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**

Saint John Lutheran Church

633 Willow Avenue
Council Bluffs, IA 51501-4242

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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

UP next!

Would you like to join our
Saint John Family?

New member classes will be held on October 4 & 18 at 9:45am
(between services). New Members will be received on October 25.

New Members

CLASS



SJ - 101

A place to grow, serve & belong.



Mitten / Coat Tree - will be placed by the
library to start collecting winter items for
Bloomer and New Visions. Items will be
collected from Sept. 1 - Oct. 25

