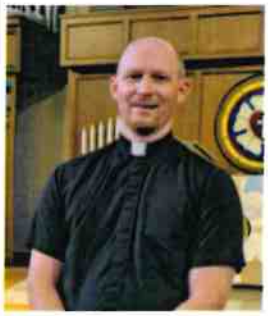
The Caller

Saint John Lutheran Church

NOVEMBER 2026



Pastor Luke Kuenzli

Interim Pastors - Pastor Sharon Worthington

and

Pastor Celeste Waymire

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

Worship Times:

Saturday - 5:30pm

Sunday - 8:30am & 11:00am

Sunday school 9:45am

Happy November, everyone! We begin this month, in which we begin to feel winter's bite more keenly, with the hope-filled grief of **All Saints Day**, November 1. We round out the month with a celebration of God's provision as we recall the hardships of the early American colonists' first winter on these shores on Thanksgiving Day. In between, we elect local, state, and national representatives to do the often-thankless work of serving our communities, and we honor our nation's veterans for their service and sacrifice for the sake of our safety. The theme of November seems to be "resilient gratitude," the reality that even in tough moments, seasons, or phases of life in community, there is yet much to be grateful for.

We in the church have, to our great advantage, the example of Jesus' own gratitude even as he underwent great suffering on our behalf, as well as the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 "let us give thanks in all circumstances;" and Colossians 2:6-7, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

At Saint John, we also celebrate the "Great Thanksgiving" (the Eucharist) with our 5th grade students. **First Communion** classes will be held between worship services on the Sunday mornings of November 15th for instruction and 22nd for bread-baking. We will celebrate First Communion with these young people on Wednesday, November 25th at our **Thanksgiving Eve** worship service, followed by a pie social!

Close to my own life and family, November is also **National Adoption Month** – it was in November of 2023 that we were privileged to permanently welcome our two youngest children to our family! I would highly encourage any who are so inclined to consider foster care and adoption. In keeping with the month's theme of "resilient gratitude," it isn't always an easy path or process, but it has, for us, led to a deep sense of thankfulness that we could grow our family in this way. For those who can't offer such care, you might consider a financial gift for Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) with a one-time gift (perhaps in honor or memory of a loved one on All Saints Day or as an "alternative Christmas gift" for a loved one who has all they need?) or a recurring gift. LSI is subcontracted to do foster and adoption work in the western part of Iowa, and your gifts can be earmarked for the specific ministry you would like to support.

The kind of resilient gratitude that Jesus calls us into is a wondrous gift of perspective. Every time we persevere through difficult situations, we are forced to grow in patience, adaptability, and creativity, and we also become more aware of others in such circumstances. This month, we will celebrate God's generosity with our annual **Stewardship weekend** on November 14-15. While this often focuses us on financial gifts, the reality is that we are stewards, also, of God's grace and love in this world. As we say in our Mission Statement every week in worship, "We are followers of Christ who seek to hear the Word, live the Word, and share the Word." We receive something* from outside of us, internalize it, and then send it back out again. *Note – the "something" we receive is God's Word, who is Jesus. In Hebrew, the word davar means both "word" and "thing." This is in keeping with the story of God's creation. When God speaks words, things happen; things come into being.

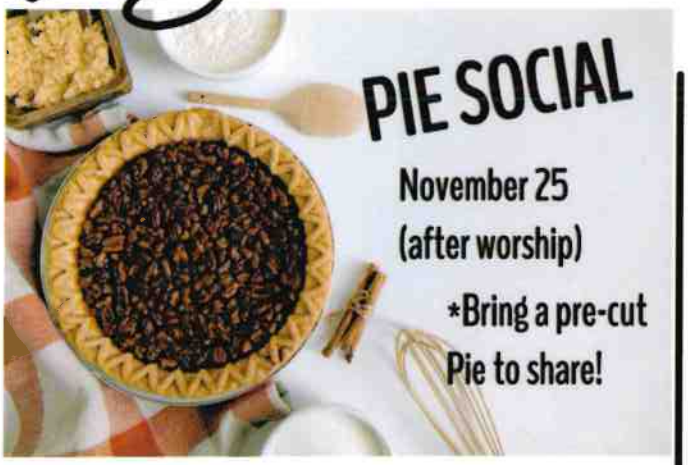
Good things are happening here at Saint John and in our community – thus we know that God is still speaking! As we move into a new Church year with **Advent** beginning on November 29th, and our preparation for the new things God did in Christ's incarnation, keep in mind the many new things God is up to within this congregation, community, and our own hearts. May you live with gratitude for God's many blessings, even when things are challenging.

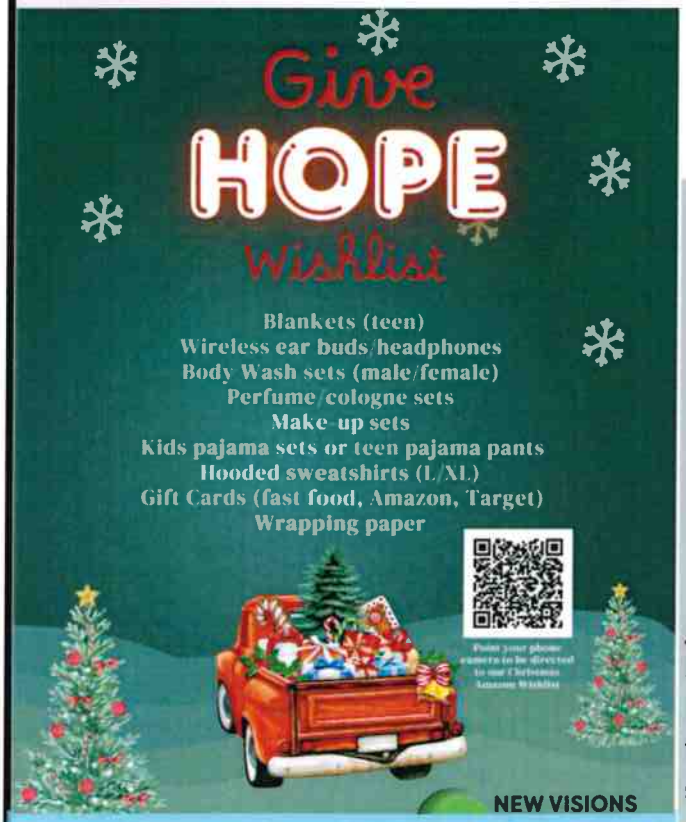
Peace ><>, Pastor Luke

5th Grade First Communion Classes

First Communion classes will be held on Sundays, November 14 & November 22 at 9:45am (between services). First Communion will take place at the Thanksgiving Eve Service on Wednesday, November 25 at 7:00pm.









Blessing Box Pantry



For the Holidays, please consider helping to stock our pantry for holiday family meals. Grab a holiday meal kit checklist on the bulletin table.

Unwrap the Season: Unwrap connection, community and celebration over the next two months! Service & Learning Committee's November and December Event Guide:

- **Chrismon Bingo:**

November 15 between services

It's bingo with a festive twist! Join us for a fun hour of fellowship, prizes and a closer look at the beautiful symbols of the season.

- **CB Fridges:**

December 13 between services

Interested in learning more about the city-wide initiative of the CB Fridges? Come to the Faith and Life Center for an interactive session.



November Book: A Painted House by John Grisham. Discussion date: November 19 at 9:15am

Foundation Grant Applications

Saint John Foundation Grant applications will be accepted through December 1. An application form is available outside the office door. They can also be emailed to you upon request; email / call the church office to be sent an application.

WELCOME New Members

We welcomed New Members on October 25.

Ron Hansen
Linda Weesner
Josh & Clarissa Weesner,
Ellie and Jackson





"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God." ~ Isaiah 40. This is 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 warm 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, November 18, 2026. Won't you join us? We meet between 9:00 A.M. and Noon at Saint John, in the FLC. We'd love to see you then! For more information, please call Sue Pagan at 712-325-0257.



Card Club will meet on November 5 & 19 at 6:30pm. Come and join us!



The Men's Club meets every 3rd Thursday of the month at 11:30am at The Dock Bar and Grill. Men of all ages are welcome to join us. Next date is November 19.



Good Times Group

Good Times Group will meet on Friday, Nov. 13 at 6:30pm in the FLC for a *Mystery Fall Dinner*. Cost of $20.00 per person will be donated to charity. PLEASE RSVP to Becky H., Katie C., or Peggy. by Monday, Nov. 9



Players Group will meet on Friday, November 6 at 5:00pm at Southside Jonesy's Taco House. Order off the menu and pay with separate checks. Roger and Mary are hosting. RSVP to Mary at 402-681-9863 or ms.burmeister@yahoo.com



October 31 & Nov. 1
Cookie Johnson
Becky Taylor
Kim Pace
Diane Hartman

November 7 & 8
Joyce Mlynarik
Alan Meilike
Margaret Schneider
Norma Jones

November 14 & 15
Carolyn Clark
Sandy Cerveny
Ruby Runte
Sue Coe
Barby James

November 21 & 22, and 26
Elaine von Gillern
Carol Wood
Andrea Hill
Patricia Minchin

CARE & SHARE

We are requesting donations of spaghetti

This is what your support of LSI makes possible. It gives kids the opportunity to grow, discover their strengths, and become strong, confident individuals. But their stories are not always easy.

One young person shared:

"I started foster care at 17 days old. I have faced many challenges and obstacles but in the end, I rose above. I was adopted at the age of 5 by a family in a small town. In that house I felt like a prisoner. They had strict rules and turned me into a real life Cinderella. This went on for a couple of years and at the age of 10 I was sent away because I was "too much". There was so much trauma that I never had the chance to heal from.

I was sent to a treatment facility in Missouri. Ended up staying there for two and a half years. During that time, I started to see my true potential. I found things that I enjoyed and stuck with them. Who knew that those years were when I would find my calling. I started to excel in school. My grades rapidly improved. I was moved from facility to facility till I was about 14.

Right before my first day of high school, I was sent to a foster home with people I barely knew. They knew that I came with baggage. At first, it was a bumpy ride. I was very closed off and scared to enjoy life. I joined the cheer squad, joined theatre, did a musical theatre performance for speech and I did choir. The common denominator in all of that was school. I knew that even after everything, school would be there.

I started to look for a longer-term and permanent home when I was 15. I interviewed with family after family. Went on weekend visits, walks and zoom calls. Eventually, I found one family who was willing to take a chance on me. It was April 2020. I met them in person for the first time at a park. 2020 was a hard time because I did not have school. I felt like I was lost until I met them. I grew attached to this family VERY quickly. We had one zoom call and I started packing.

I had lost hope that I would find my forever home. I went for a weekend visit in May of 2020 and never left. I instantly felt welcome. They supported my dreams of becoming a teacher. My junior year of high school, I switched schools. I was absolutely terrified at the idea of starting over again but there were so many things that I benefited from. I joined cheer and became captain, I joined choir, I continued to do theatre.

There was one major tip of the scales. I was given the opportunity to take college courses. I sat down with my parents and told them that I really wanted to do this. Without hesitation, they signed me up and now, I am student teaching, 4 years later at a local elementary school. All because they believed I could do it."

BETHANY
Lutheran Health Services

LUNCH & LEARN AT BETHANY HEIGHTS

Empowering Your Future with Knowledge & Care



Date: November 4th, 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: November 2nd, 2026
Call: 712-328-8228
Email: activitiesbh@blhs.care

Join us as Mikala Smith, Clinical Manager with Care Initiatives Hospice presents on:

Hospice 101: Understanding the Benefits of Earlier Admission

Discussing the basics of hospice care and how it can support individuals and their families during a difficult time. Learn what hospice really means, who can benefit from hospice services, what support is available, and why considering hospice earlier can provide meaningful benefits for both patients and their loved ones.

BETHANY
Lutheran Health Services

Care Initiatives Hospice

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

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



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

Saint John Lutheran Church

NOVEMBER 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 **All Saints Day** Communion 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday school 11:00am Worship	2	3 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	4 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell choir 6:30pm Confirmation class 6:30pm Youth Group 7:30pm Chancel Choir	5 6:30pm Card Club 7:30pm CMA Meeting	6 5:00pm Players Group	7 5:30pm Worship
8 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday school 11:00am Worship	9	10 9:30am Esther Group 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	11 *Office Closed - Federal Holiday* 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell choir 6:30pm Confirmation class 6:30pm Youth Group 7:30pm Chancel Choir	12 9:00am Mary Group 7:30pm CMA Meeting	13 6:30pm Good Time Group	14 **Stewardship Weekend** Communion 5:30pm Worship
15 **Stewardship Weekend** Communion 8:30am Worship **9:45am Chrismon BINGO in FLC** **9:45am First Communion Class** 9:45am Sunday school 11:00am Worship	16	17 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	18 *Caller Mailed* 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am Quilting Group 6:30pm Bell choir 6:30pm Confirmation class 6:30pm Youth Group 7:30pm Chancel Choir	19 9:15am Book Club 11:30am Men's Club 6:30pm Card Club 7:30pm CMA Meeting	20	21 5:30pm Worship
22 8:30am Worship **9:45am First Communion Class** **9:45am Stewardship Training (Communion & Lectors)** 9:45am Sunday school 11:00am Worship	23	24 7:00pm Church Council 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	25 9:00am Bible Study **7:00pm Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service** 8:00pm Annual Pie Social	26 **Thanksgiving Day**	27 *Office Closed*	28 5:30pm Worship
29 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday school 11:00am Worship	30					

Saint John Lutheran Church

Birthdays

November 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Jeyda Alderton Roberta Califf Eberhard Hering Sandra Newberg	**2** Molly Fellows Roman Townsend	**3**	**4** Luke Harm	**5** Chloe Perfect	**6** Jeff Hamling Aiden Kennedy	**7** Winnie Harm Cora Pestel
8 Kristy Harm	**9** Denise Fischer LaDonna Jeffrey	**10** Bev Solliday	**11** Laine Hirt Linda Weesner	**12** Dave Johnson	**13** Audrey Clanton	**14**
15 Art Hill	**16**	**17** Vivian Townsend	**18** Laura Nelson Norma Pope Beran Stroup	**19** Mackenzie Frush	**20**	**21**
22 Richard Claussen Burke Swenson	**23**	**24** Marjorie Giles	**25**	**26** Scott Hartman	**27** Joe Bertelsen James Senkbile	**28** Megan Petersen
29 Lori Thomas	**30** Linda Hoel Alice VanderMeulen					





85th Birthday
Bev Solliday (November 10)

90th Birthday
Rev. E. Hering (November 1)

90th Birthday
Sandra Newberg (November 1)

101st Birthday!
Marjorie Giles (November 24)

50th Wedding Anniversary
Gary & Beth Matters (November 6)

60th Wedding Anniversary
Bev & Maynard Solliday (November 23)

77th Wedding Anniversary
Roy & Lois Adams (November 12)



Sympathy to the families of...

Dale Haven

Geraldine Nicholson - mother of Andrea Hill

Lyn Smith - grandmother of Rachel Kuenzli





WE give thanks for the men and women who have served our country with courage and dedication. We honor their sacrifice and pray for peace.



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/SaintJohnCouncilBluffs

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COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA
PERMIT NO. 68
ZIP PLUS FOUR



Saturday 5:30
Sunday 8:30 &
11:00am

FIRST Communion

First Communion Classes

November 15 & 22 at 9:45am

