

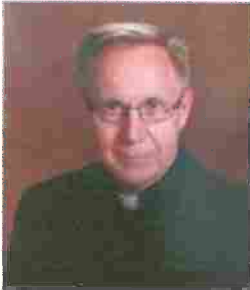
January 2017

The Caller

Saint John Lutheran Church



Capital Campaign 2107-2019



Pastor Jon Benson

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

Just last week, I received a compliment in regard to Saint John, one which should be shared. I had requested from the ELCA Mission Investment Fund the current balance of our mortgage – which, incidentally, is through them – and was put in touch with a person by the name of Danial Lammers. Very quickly into our conversation, Mr. Lammers expressed his congratulations on how “aggressively the members of Saint John are paying off the debt” (his words, almost verbatim!) of our current loan. Of course, I told him that the only reason that we should receive such a compliment is the **GENEROSITY of you, the members of Saint John** – hence, my need to share with you his words.

So, here are some of the figures that Mr. Lammers shared with me:

Current loan balance:	\$1,590,453	(down from initial balance of \$2.4 million)
December payment:	\$18,559.70	
Interest paid.....	\$6093.00	
Principle paid.....	8532.70	
Additional principle paid.....	3934.00	
(which means we made a total principle payment of.....)	\$12,466.70!!!)	
Time remaining to pay off loan:	8 years, 9 months	

Needless to say, we have some distance to go before we are debt free. I do, however, take the compliment from Mr. Lammers as great encouragement for us to continue the course that we set when we began this journey, now over seven years ago. Even more encouraging is the great impact that our new facility has had, both for the ministry of Saint John and for the community of Council Bluffs as a whole.

To continue this journey, **Saint John is entering into another 3-year capital campaign.** The “theme” of this campaign is yet to be determined, but the purpose of the campaign **will primarily be for debt reduction.** As our consultant for this campaign, the council of Saint John has chosen **Paula Kitt**, who is on the staff of the ELCA Mission Investment Fund and brings a wealth of experience to the task. Over the course of the campaign, you will have opportunity to get acquainted with Paula and find her to be very personable. The Leadership Team is almost entirely chosen and is already in the planning stage of the campaign. Two weekends that you will want to put on your calendar are: **Kick-off weekend – February 18-19; and, the in-gathering of pledges – March 25-26.**

I cannot express enough my gratitude to you, the members of Saint John. Your commitment to the Lord and your generosity to his church continue to overwhelm me. As always, every pledge matters and no one is expected to pledge more than he or she is able. I welcome your questions and thoughts, asking that you would also pray that the Lord would bless our work in this campaign over the next number of months and continue to bless the ministry to which he has entrusted us here at Saint John Lutheran Church.

Blessings!
Pastor Jon

January with Saint John High School Youth

Jan 4	Game Night
Jan 11	Mission Trip Information Meeting-for Parents and Youth (6:30-7:15)
Jan 15 (SUNDAY)	Mission Trip Information Meeting-for Parents and Youth (for those who couldn't make it to the first one-9:45-10:30 a.m.)
Jan 18	Lesson- <i>The Intellectual</i>
Jan 25	Meal Prep for the Center for Healthy Families

By now, all families with students in grades 8-12 should have received a mailing about the 2017 Mission Trip. Please note that there will be informational meetings this month to answer questions for both parents and youth.

The God Language focus for January is the "Intellectual: Loving God Through the Mind". You don't have to look far in our congregation to find a couple of Intellectuals! Pastor Jon & Pastor Ben are both going to share with youth how you can love God and deepen your faith by stimulating your mind!

Confirmation, 6th-8th Grades

IMPORTANT CONFIRMATION DATES FOR JANUARY

- Jan. 4 - Mentor Night (Scripture) (5:30 meal-6:30 class)
- Jan. 11- Small Group (Petition 6) (5:30 meal, 6:30 class)
- Jan. 18 - Small Group (Petition 7) (5:30 meal, 6:30 class)
- Jan. 25 - Large Group (Review Lord;s Prayer—Diff forms of expression on it) (5:30 meal, 6:30 class)

Confirmation Announcements:

Class will resume on Wednesday, January 4 with our first meeting being "Mentor Night." Thank you to all congregation members who contribute to this educational, and more importantly *relational*, ministry to our students!

Carol Joy Holling Camp

Early Bird Savings – If you register your child for camp before January 31 you will get a **\$50 discount** for a full-week session. Look for the Carol Joy Holling flyer on the table by the office.

Thank You

Thank you so very much for the delicious meals you have make for our parenting classes this fall. Everything has been just wonderful and our parents & children have very much enjoyed them! I hope you have had fun cooking!! Also, thank you so much for attending & participating in our fundraising event. We loved having you participate by conducting our blessing and auctioning off a hug! The additional funds you raised through this will help so many children. You are such a blessing to our program, staff and families. Thank you for all that you do.

Susan Pawlaski, Lutheran Family Services.

Prime Rib Dinner

Mark your calendars! The Annual Prime Rib Dinner will be on Saturday, February 11. Watch for more details.

Thank You

Hats, Mittens, Coats Galore! Thank you to everyone who donated hats, mittens, gloves and coats to Bloomer School and Rocky Boy Indian Reservation. They are very grateful that the children have warm clothes for the cold winter. Thanks for you generosity and care!

Thank You to all who donated presents to the Community of Christ and MOHM's Place toy/gift drives. It makes a huge difference in our community.



Bethany News

Bethany Lutheran Home Annual Meeting January 8th-The Annual Meeting of Bethany Lutheran Home will be held on **Sunday, January 8th at 2:00 p.m.** in the Skyrise Dining Room (Upper Dining Room) at Bethany, 7 Elliott Street. All Sponsoring Congregation Delegates are encouraged to attend. Visitors are also welcome. The meeting will include various department reports, financial report, and election of Board Members for 2017. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Brenda Hennigs at Bethany Lutheran Home 712-328-9500. *In the event of inclement weather or our need to postpone the meeting due to flu, please contact Bethany at 712-328-9500 and/or tune to your local television station if appropriate, before heading to Bethany.*

Bethany Auxiliary Meeting- The Quarterly meeting of the Bethany Auxiliary will be held on **Monday, January 9th at 2:00 p.m.** The meeting will include the installation of officers as well as discussion of upcoming projects. For more information, please contact your church key lady or Diane Carlon at 712-329-5451.

Bethany Christmas Store Thank You-The 6th Annual Bethany Christmas Store was a huge success thanks to many donated items and the support of our congregations and Bethany Auxiliary. The residents enjoyed many days of shopping for family members and a chance to reminisce about days gone by. The Christmas Store was a meaningful highlight for residents and staff and an opportunity to remember the reason for this season. Many individuals love to shop the "After Christmas Sales" and plan for next year. Christmas Store items and gift bags are accepted all year long. If you would like to donate items after Christmas, please contact Kaily Stanley at 712-328-9500, ext. 230 to make arrangements. Thank you for your generosity in making this event a time to remember each year.

Bethany Heights Apartments Available- Bethany Heights currently has multiple apartments available for seniors. The selection of apartments ranges from studio to two bedroom/two bathroom. Our promotional move-in special rate includes 25% off the first month of rent now through March 1. Come experience the companionship and devoted care Bethany has to offer! Please contact Paula Fandry for inquiries or to schedule a tour at 712-328-8228.

Saint John Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 29 at 12:45 p.m. Lunch will be served at 12:15 p.m. Please make a reservation if you plan to eat. Call the church office, 323-7173.

Good Time Group

The Good Time Group will be meeting on Saturday, January 7, 2017, to take down the Christmas decorations at 9:00 a.m. After the decorations are all put away for another year, we will be having our annual meeting in the Welcome Center. The more the merrier and faster to get the job done! Please plan to attend. Snacks provided.

Men's Club

The Men's Club will meet next on January 19 at 11:30 am at Sugar's, 2725 E. Kanessville Blvd. Men of all ages are welcome to join us for a good lunch and great conversation. Call the church office (323-7173) or sign up on the bulletin insert during worship if you plan to attend.

The Book Club ChristCare

The Book Club meets the 2nd Thursday of the month. We are currently reading Divine Opportunity by Ryan Montague. We extend an open invitation to those interested in attending. Contact Marlys Lien for more information on location because we are rotating between members this year for our meetings.

Saint John T-Shirts

There are a few gray 125 Anniversary T-Shirts available for sale \$6.50 each. Contact church office or see Patricia between services on Sunday.

Thank You

Dear brothers and sisters of Saint John- We are so joyful for our time serving and becoming members of this wonderful church family. We are grateful for your welcome, support, and now the Christmas cards, gifts and well-wishes. You have truly blessed our family and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We look forward to the ministry we will do together in the New Year, and pray God's blessings upon each of you for peace and joy in 2017.

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Ben & Monica, Phoebe & Micaela McIntire

Lessons From a Snowman

- It's okay to wear white well after Labor Day.
- Simply hanging out in your front yard can be fun.
- Accessories don't have to be fancy or expensive.
- We're all made mostly of water.
- You know you've "arrived" when a song is written about you.
- So what if you're a little bottom-heavy?
- Don't get too much sun.
- Sweating too much can be disastrous!



Sewing Group

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him" ~ Romans 15:13



With a comforting embrace, a quilt can provide someone with a quieting respite from the world! Quilts help to lift up those who may be hurting. Wherever they travel, quilts provide a tangible message of love and hope for a brighter future. The quilts we create with our hands help to meet God's call in a large way. And quilt-making itself is certainly doing good; gathering together in fellowship, creating a tangible message of love and caring to strangers in a far off land, and delivering warmth and comfort to those who need it most. The *Saint John Sewing Group* is always looking for a new pair of hands to help tie quilts for Lutheran World Relief! We'll try to make you feel right at home, whether you come just once or wish to become part of this ministry. Please come and share in fellowship, devotions, and snacks. Next meeting will be January 18th, between 9:00 a.m. and Noon. See you then! For more information, please call Sue Pagan at 325-0257.

Mitten Tree

Please bring new hats, mittens & scarves to decorate the tree in the Welcome Center. The items will be donated to children at Bloomer Elementary school and Rocky Boy Reservation in Montana. **The deadline to donate is January 8.**

Altar Flowers

If you would like to provide altar flowers in memory of, or in honor of someone, please call the church office, 323-7173. *All weekends in January and February are still open.* Cost for altar flowers (set of 2) is \$25.68 and cost for chancel flowers (1) is \$21.40.

Help For the Mauchs

Mary Mauch, who is pregnant with twins, has been having some health issues and is on bed rest. If you would like to help Mary & Josh (and daughter Autumn) by providing a meal to them please go to the following website to sign up on the schedule: <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/v6zv1e> or call the church office and we can do it for you.

Stephen Ministries

Do you, a family member, or someone you know have a need or a care? If so, contact Pastor Benson (323-7173), Mary Lou Hansen (322-7248), Debbie Plugge (256-5310) or Alan Meilike (328-1671) and a Stephen Minister will be assigned to you. Please note that all communications are always CONFIDENTIAL.

Prayer Shawl

The Prayer Shawl group meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. The next meeting will be on January 10.

Altar Guild Schedule

Dec. 31-Jan. 6

Marlys Lien
Mary Jensen
Shelly Menard
Andreia Nebel

Jan. 7-13

Jan Girton
Cookie Johnson
Becky Taylor
Kim Pace

Jan. 14-20

Norma Gahm
Linda Hansen
Patricia Minchin
Elaine VonGillern

Jan. 21-27

Mary Lou Burke
Mary Lou Hansen
Alan Meilike
Marie Neal

Jan. 28-Feb. 3

Marlys Lien
Mary Jensen
Shelly Menard
Andreia Nebel

Altar Guild meeting: Monday, Jan 26 at 1:30 p.m.

Women of the Church Schedule

Ruth Group: Mon., Jan 9, 1:30 p.m. at church
Esther Group: No meeting
Mary Group: Thurs., Jan. 12, 9:30 a.m. at church

Women's Board Meeting: Tuesday, Jan. 24 at 9:00 a.m.

Stewardship

Christmas is not a celebration that happens only on December 25th; Christmas is a season that **starts** on December 25th and lasts until January 6th. With that in mind, I'd like us to focus on this eternal truth about Christmas:

"For unto us a Child is born,
unto us a Son is given...
and His name shall be called Immanuel...
which means, "God with us!"

Christmas reminds us that our loving God is the *biggest giver!* There is no bigger gift under any Christmas tree! And the best part is that it lasts the entire year!

Have a merry & blessed Christmas...
and a New Year filled with God's loving presence!

P.S. Don't forget to share a little bit of His love with others.

- Saint John Stewardship Committee

Saint John Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 29 at 12:45 p.m. Lunch will be served at 12:15 p.m. Please make a reservation if you plan to eat. Call the church office, 323-7173.

Nebraska Wesleyan University Choir

The Nebraska Wesleyan University Choir will be performing at Saint John on Friday, January 13 at 7:00 p.m. The choir is a 49-voice ensemble, more than half of whom are music majors. The choir is admired throughout the country and internationally for performing excellence and regularly presents a varied repertoire rich in global diversity. Our Chancel Choir director, Eric Wyler, is an alumni of Nebraska Wesleyan.

Sympathy to the Families of

Blake Smith, great-nephew of Barbara Paulson, who passed away on November 12.

Brinnon Scheiki

Floyd Fischer, who passed away on November 19.

Linda Dalbey

Pastor Robert Vaage, of Milford, Iowa, who died on November 26.

Pastor John Estrem, who died on December 1. Pastor Estrem was Pastor Jon's pastor while growing up in North Dakota.

John Bissell, who passed away on December 10.

Keith Warford, who passed away on December 19.

December Milestones

85th Birthday

Mary Lou Hansen (Jan. 22)
116 N. 29th St.
Co. Bluffs, IA 51501

90th Birthday

Alvina Hjortsvang (Jan. 5)
1920 Parkwild Dr. #51
Co. Bluffs, IA 51503

91st Birthdays

Eldred Butts (Jan. 14)	Fred Lainson (Jan. 25)
822 So. Main St. #218	173 Bennett Ave. Apt. 3170
Co. Bluffs, IA 51501	Co. Bluffs, IA 51503

92nd Birthday

Kitty Richardson (Jan. 11)
173 Bennett Ave. Apt. 1240
Co. Bluffs, IA 51503

94th Birthday

Wayne Jacobsen (Jan. 7)
2030 S. 11th St.
Co. Bluffs, IA 51501

Baptism

Lexington Rose Damgaard, daughter of Kate & Any Damgaard, was baptized on November 27.

New Arrivals

Norma & Joe Gahm have two new great-grandsons! Kavish Marshall Gahm of Fairhope, AL was born on December 7 and Ace Joel Brown of Ankeny, IA was born on December 8.

Contact Us

Senior Pastor: Rev. E. Jon Benson (JonBenson@SaintJohnELCA.org)

Interim Children, Youth & Family Pastor: Rev. Ben McIntire (ben.mcintire.rev@wisynod.org)

High School Youth Leader: Allie VanRoekel

Parish Ministry Coordinator: Patricia S. Minchin

Chancel / Bell Choir Director: Eric Wyler (wyler.eric@gmail.com)

Pianist/Organist: Joan Ebersold

Choir On Fire Director: Tracy Frush

Nursery Attendant: Amy Pedersen

Children's Hour Director: Judith Devereaux

Missionaries: Revs. Colin and Jeni Grangaard

Stephen Minister Leaders: Mary Lou Hansen (322-7248), Alan Meilike (328-1671) Debbie Plugge (256-5310)

Pastor Jon Benson (323-7173)

Office Manager and *The Caller* Editor: Terri Damgaard (TerriD@SaintJohnELCA.org)

Custodian: Debbie Baird

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/SaintJohnCouncilBluffs ~ Twitter: ConnectatSJLC

Saint John Lutheran Church

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Saint John Lutheran Church Annual Meeting

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Lunch served at 12:15.

Please make a reservation if you plan to eat.
Call the Church Office, 712-323-7173.