

April 2017

The Caller

Saint John Lutheran Church



Pastor Ben McIntire

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

Why Easter Eggs?

I'm always fascinated by some of the weird things we do in our religions and traditions. There is so much symbolism; not just in Christianity, but in all religions and even secular traditions. And this season, I took it upon myself to learn about the Easter Egg. Why are these colorful eggs a part of the celebration of Jesus' Resurrection?

As is often the case, the tradition of decorating and hiding eggs predates Christianity. It may seem fairly obvious to you that the egg is a natural choice as a symbol of new life, since lots of little critters hatch out of them to begin new lives. Ancient pagan religions abound with fertility rituals and celebrations, and at the center of many of these were eggs. With spring being the time of year when many animals and birds produce offspring, as well as dormant plant life coming back into bloom, most fertility rituals also took place in this season of new life. Zoroastrians in ancient Persia celebrated Nowruz, the spring equinox, with eggs. Ancient Anglo-Saxons exchanged decorated eggs with friends during April in honor of their fertility goddess, Eostre—whose name we take for the Sunday of Christ's resurrection, Easter Sunday.

Eggs are also a part of the Jewish festival of Passover, being included in the Seder meal which commemorates the Hebrew Exodus out of Egypt where they were enslaved. At the Passover meal salty, hard-boiled eggs are eaten along with the roasted lamb, bitter herbs, matzah bread, and the other special foods. So at Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, an egg would have been part of that Passover meal for him too.

In early Christian stories, there are a couple of legends about Mary Magdalene bringing eggs to the tomb to eat with the other women who went to finish the burial rites for Jesus. The legend says that when she met the Risen Lord, the eggs she carried turned blood-red. Other symbolism notes that the egg is the same shape as the stone that was rolled back from the empty tomb's entrance, and that as a bird or chick hatches from such an object, the symbolism of resurrection or new life is complete.

Finally the Lenten tradition of the early church of fasting during this season, which continues in many Christian communities today, includes abstaining from eating meat, eggs, and dairy products. For this reason, any eggs that domestic chickens lay are often hard-boiled in order to preserve them until Easter brings the end of the fast, and eggs are again part of the festival meal.

I know that dying eggs bright pink, yellow, green, blue, orange, red and purple is fun and beautiful, and the candy eggs or plastic eggs full of jellybeans are yummy too; but I hope this Easter season, you will take a moment to ponder this symbolism, and to remember the New Life that we have because of Christ and this amazing miracle of the Resurrection. This Easter, and always, we celebrate this hope of victory over death—as well as a new chance at this life, here and now, as Christ's followers called to live with gratitude, grace, and joy. May you have a blessed Easter!

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Ben McIntire

High School Youth

In April, the Saint John High School Youth will work on *discovering purpose* through special coaching processes. Youth age 16 and up will have a lock-in experience on Saturday, April 8 focused on a life planning process designated to help youth contemplate their life purpose in these areas: Personal, Family, Vocation, Faith, Community. A lock-in will be held at church beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Youth under the age of 16 will be invited to learn about their strengths on Wednesdays, April 22 & 29. Alli will take them through their *Gallup StrengthsFinder* surveys to learn about their unique set of strengths and how to apply them to their life goals.

Please email Alli Van Roekel with questions: allvanroekel@gmail.com



Rooted in Faith, Forward in Mission

Wonderful things happened last weekend on Commitment Sunday! We prayed and God answered our prayers. The Holy Spirit moved among us as we prayed for an expanding mission and ministry in 2017 and beyond.

Our First Report indicates that 107 pledges were received for a total of \$486,582 over the three-year giving period for our *Rooted in Faith, Forward in Mission* campaign. We were grateful to see 289 worshipers in church on Commitment Weekend. Sunday was truly "the day that the Lord has made" and we rejoiced in it. All praise and thanksgiving to God.

We still need more in pledges to reach our goal of \$750,000. The load is never heavy when everyone lifts. Pledge cards are available at church or call the church office and one will be mailed to you.

A Tribute to Stephen Ministry

I was in a place where few people could relate to me and fewer knew how to talk to me about my pain. I was grieving deeply because I discovered my husband and I were infertile. This changed my whole view of my future, and my relationship to everyone, including God. As people continually asked me "When are you going to have kids?". I had to decide if I would lie to get them to go away or tell them the truth and listen to their sometimes ignorant or insensitive responses. I began meeting with a Stephen's Minister to help me have a safe place to process my feelings and my grief. She listened to me without trying to solve my problem. She listened without being uncomfortable with my pain. She was simply there, in my time of need when I had a gaping wound I didn't want others to see. She also taught me how important it was to allow myself permission to grieve, and gave me resources that helped my understand the grieving process. I'm very grateful for my Stephen's Minister who walked a portion of my journey with me, when it was most raw.

Alli VanRoekel

Confirmation, 6th-8th Grades

IMPORTANT CONFIRMATION DATES FOR APRIL

April 5 - Lenten Worship (No Class)

April 19—Lent Project Presentations
(Mentors and parents are invited)

April 26—Lent Project Presentations
(Mentors and parents are invited)

Confirmation, 8th Grade

Confirmation Sunday will be May 7 at the 11:00am service. We have a huge class of eighth graders this year who will be affirming the faith into which they have been baptized, and invite the congregation to celebrate along with these students and their families. Mark your calendars now, and look for more information and the list of confirmands in the May newsletter!

Vacation Bible School

"Love" Kids? Want to spread the Word of God to young people? Have we got the perfect job for you this summer! We are in need of 3 VBS teachers. One teacher for grades 3-6, and 2 teachers for grades Pre-K thru 2nd grade. Our theme this year is **Camp Agape: Come Gather Around God's Love**. The dates are July 10th – 13th. Lesson Plans are being developed now for your preparation in teaching. There will be a central Bible verse and story each night. We ask that you prayerful consider helping us spread God's Love this year at Camp Agape! Please contact Deb Ingwersen with any questions.

Simply Giving Program

Endorsed by Thrivent Federal Credit Union

We want to remind you that we offer electronic giving as a way to automate your offerings. Electronic giving offers convenience for individual congregation members and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation. For more information and the authorization form please contact the church office, 712-323-7173.

Saint John Facebook

Have you seen the Saint John Lutheran Church Council Bluffs IA Facebook page? We're trying to keep it updated. If you want more information posted on it or have suggestions, please let us know! Thank you so much, Heather Thompson
kandhthompson@icloud.com or 712-323-8391

Scrip Cards

Using Scrip doesn't cost you anything, you pay face value for a card but the church profits from what you pay. The church benefits whether it is your regular shopping or gift.

Bethany News

Auxiliary Meeting and Bake Sale—Please note that the April meeting of the Bethany Auxiliary will be held on **April 10th at 2:00 p.m.** This will be the quarterly meeting and bake sale. This year the bake sale will be held at both Bethany Lutheran Home and Bethany Heights. Individuals are encouraged to donate baked good items for the sale. (Items packaged in smaller quantities are always appreciated by the Residents and Tenants). *Please do not price your items.* Thank you for your support of this fundraiser. Supplemental funds are being provided by Thrivent Financial Pottawattamie County Chapter.

Volunteer and Spiritual Life Tea—*“Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”* – Margaret Mead. We are proud of our Volunteers, Sponsoring Congregations, Pastors and Secretaries. We want to say thank you to you. Whether you've served as a Key Lady; led worship; helped out with Bingo, a Birthday Party or the Auxiliary; baked a pie, cake or have helped out at the Ice Cream Social; whether you've contributed or helped at the Salad Luncheon; whether you have provided volunteer time visiting Residents and Tenants or helping with an Activity or anything else; we want to recognize and thank you. Invitations will be sent out so please join us as we recognize our volunteers on **Sunday, April 30th at 2:00 p.m. at Bethany Lutheran Home, 7 Elliott Street.** Join us for an afternoon of fun, fellowship and entertainment as we say thank you for what you have done for Bethany Lutheran Home and Bethany Heights. We look forward to seeing you on April 30th.

Bethany Heights Apartments Available—Bethany Heights currently has multiple one bedroom apartment selections available for seniors. 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.

Men's Club

The Men's Club will meet next on April 13 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.

Good Time Group

The Good Time Group will be going to Uncle Bucks at the Bass Pro Shop on Saturday, April 8th at 7:00pm. Please RSVP to Mike and Diane Ashbaugh at mdash66@cox.net or call 712-323-3234 by April 3. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

Thanks

Dear Friends of Lutheran Lakeside Camp,
Thank you so much for your generous gift of \$500.00 from your silent quilt auction. Your gift is making difference in the lives of children. Now more than ever children need outdoor ministries like Lutheran Lakeside Camp. Statistics show that 7% of the nation's children spend less than 1 hour a week outside of their own will. Children need to experience the awe of God in nature. Thank you for your partnership in providing this experience for children and adults.

Please remember the camp in your prayers as we seek to provide experiences that will open them up to listening for God's call in their lives.

May the Lord continue to bless your congregation. Thank you for your ongoing support!

Shalom,
Jerry & Carolyn Fritsch
Executive Directors

Dear St. John Congregation,

The Council Bluffs Cosmopolitan Club thanks you for supporting our efforts by allowing us to use your fine facilities for our recent pancake feed. The money we raised from this event will be used to send local youths who have been diagnosed with diabetes to summer camp.

This is not your typical summer camp Attendees spend the first half of each day learning how to cope with their disease through intensive education classes. The afternoons are spent doing "regular" camping activities like hiking, swimming, horse back riding, etc.

The Council Bluffs Cosmos have been instrumental in sending many area students to this week long experience. That being said, we couldn't do it without the support of the Council Bluffs community and your congregation in particular.

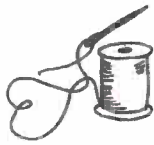
We hope that we can continue to have you as a partner as we go forward with this annual event.

Respectfully yours,
Ronald Fox, Secretary

Sewing Group

"It is not how much you do, but how much love you put in the doing."

— Mother Theresa



When we are tired and weary it seems that all we wish for is a comforting place to rest. Where might we be if we didn't have that warm, safe place? What if we could help others in need? The quilts

we create with our hands help to meet God's call to comfort His people. 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 April 19th, between 9:00 a.m. and Noon. See you then! For more information, please call Sue Pagan at 325-0257.

Prayer Shawl

The Prayer Shawl group meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. The next meeting will be on April 18.

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.

Service & Witness Committee

Diaper Derby

We will be having a Diaper Derby for Children & Families of Iowa sometime this spring. Watch for announcements in the bulletin or posters in the Welcome Center.

Bloomer School

We would like to do something for Bloomer teachers for Teacher Appreciation Week, May 1st – 5th. Please contact us if you have any ideas or suggestions for the 65 teachers at Bloomer Elementary.

Saint John Mugs

Mugs are still available to buy for \$7.00 each. Look for the table by the bookshelves in the Welcome Center.

Altar Guild Schedule

April 1-7

Jan Girton
Cookie Johnson
Kim Pace
Becky Taylor

April 8-14

Norma Gahm
Linda Hansen
Patricia Minchin
Elaine VonGillern

April 15-21

Mary Lou Burke
Mary Lou Hansen
Alan Meilike
Marie Neal

April 22-28

Mary Jensen
Marlys Lien
Shelly Menard
Andreia Nebel

April 29-May 5

Jan Girton
Cookie Johnson
Kim Pace
Becky Taylor

No Altar Guild meeting in April.

Women of the Church Schedule

Ruth Group: Mon., April 3, 1:30 p.m.
Esther Group: Tues., April 11, 9:30 a.m.
Mary Group: Thurs., April 13, 9:00 a.m.

Women's Board Meeting: Tuesday, April 25 at 9:30 a.m.



"Hope the choir does some hip-hop for Easter!"

70th Wedding Anniversary Open House

Chuck & Lottie Tawzer invite you to an Open House celebrating their 70th Wedding Anniversary on Saturday, April 8, 2:00-4:00 p.m. in the Faith & Life Center. No gifts please.

Kelsey Benson Shower

You are invited to a wedding shower for Kelsey Benson on Sunday, April 9 at 2:00 pm in the Faith & Life Center. Please RSVP by April 4 by calling the church office (323-7173) and also let us know if you plan to participate in the group gift (\$10.00).

TOGETHER WITH THEIR PARENTS

Kelsey Sarah Benson & Jacob Benjamin Bang

INVITE YOU TO JOIN THEM AT
THE CELEBRATION OF THEIR WEDDING

Saturday, May 13, 2017 at 1:00 pm
Saint John Lutheran Church

Cake reception to follow.

New Arrival

Evelyn Annmari Repair, great-granddaughter of Alvina Hjortsvang, was born on March 14 to David & Christina Repair.

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.

Weekends in April and May are still open.

Cost for altar flowers (set of 2) is \$25.68 and cost for chancel flowers (1) is \$21.40.

April Milestones

80th Birthdays

Ken Taylor (April 7) 1613 Baldwin Circle Co. Bluffs, IA 51503	Jan Girton (April 10) 2315 S 12th St. Co. Bluffs, IA 51501
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Baptisms

Saturday, March 18 – Myles Kinnick Harter, son of Samantha & Kevin Harter

Sunday, March 26 – Ella Arthea Youngs, daughter of Shelly and Zeb Youngs

First Communion

Gracie Renee Hays, daughter of Jill & Russ Hays, received First Communion on March 19.

Sympathy to the Families of ...

Lovella Tye, mother of Keith Tye, who passed away on March 22.

Beverly McAtee, who passed away on March 20.

Doris Rodenburg, grandmother of Julie Hays, who passed away on March 19.

Ervin Konz, grandfather of Glen Campbell, who passed away on March 18.

Elaine Campbell, mother of Glen Campbell, who passed away on March 14.

Scott Wilcox, husband of Nynette, who passed away on March 9.

Doris Caughlin, mother of Linda Muehlig, who passed away on February 21.

Pastor Roger Prescott, who passed away on February 13.

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)

Office Assistant: Kim Malskeit

Custodian: Debbie Baird

Church 712-323-7173 ~ Fax 712-323-7174 ~ Warmline: 712-328-8898
Email: Info@SaintJohnELCA.org ~ Website: www.SaintJohnELCA.org

Saint John Lutheran Church

633 Willow Ave.
Council Bluffs, IA 51501-4242

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HOLY WEEK



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday, April 9, 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday, April 13, 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday, April 14, 7:00 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 15, 5:30 p.m.

Easter Morning, April 16

6:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m.