

Pastor Jon Benson

Interim Pastor -
Pastor Sharon
Worthington

CALL ACCEPTED!

We are excited to announce that Pastor Luke Kuenzli has accepted our letter of call! His start date will be around the first of the New Year.

The Saint John congregation showed up with a large gathering for Pr. Luke's meet and greet. Questions were asked and answered, the vote was taken and the call was accepted.

Please prepare to welcome Pr. Luke, Rachel and their children into our Saint John family!



Wednesday night Advent services at 7:00pm on December 4, 11 and 18th.

Special dates:

December 7:

Sunday school program practice 8:30 - 10:00am
Cookies, Cocoa & Jesus Family Event 10:00 - 11:30

December 8: 8:30am Special Music Festival
11:00am Christmas Road Trip
(Sunday school program)

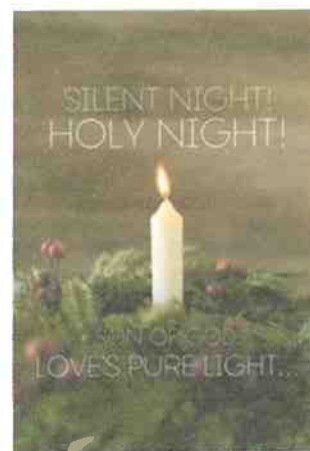
December 22: 8:30 & 11:00am Choir Cantata

December 24 Christmas Eve Services

3:30pm

5:30pm

10:30pm



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

Saturday - 5:30pm

Sunday - 8:30 am
& 11:00am

Sunday school -
9:45am



Sat., December 7
 Kids will practice for the Christmas program from 8:30 - 10:00am. Then families are invited to join in for some fun from 10:00 - 11:30am



You are invited to our Christmas Road Trip Musical Program.
Sunday, December 8 at the 11:00 service.

Poinsettia orders will be taken until Sunday, December 8.

Dedication forms can be found on the welcome table with the bulletins.

Cost is \$7.00/plant.



First Communion
 November 27, 2024

Jeyda Alderton
 Audrey Clanton
 Macy Olson
 Isaac Petersen

Nolan Phillips
 Addilyn Schneider
 Evan Solon
 Kira Wilson

Dear Members of Saint John,

Now that you have officially issued a letter of call to Pastor Luke Kuenzli, and the call has been accepted, it is time I let you know what my plans are. **My retirement date is scheduled for next summer, July 31, 2025. After that date, I will no longer be available to provide pastoral ministry to members of Saint John.**

We will have a **“transition period,”** where my call overlaps with Pastor Kuenzli’s call for about 5-6 months. During that transition, Pastor Kuenzli will function as the Senior Pastor of Saint John. Any decisions, whether major or minor, will be directed to him. I will be here primarily to assist and support him as he assumes the position of Senior Pastor. We plan for both of us to share the preaching schedule, to preside at the sacraments, to officiate funerals and to provide hospital and home visits.

Obviously, the success of this transition will depend on a number of factors, involving not only Pastor Kuenzli and myself, **but also YOU, the members of Saint John.** Having been your pastor for almost 22 years, adjusting to a new Senior Pastor will take time. At the meet and greet, Pastor Luke said his main priority during the first 6 months is to develop relationships with members of Saint John. I will do whatever I can to help Pastor Luke (and you) achieve that goal, during the transition time. To that end, **after July 31, 2025, I will no longer be available for weddings, funerals, baptisms or any other pastoral acts at Saint John.**

Finally, I thank God for calling me to serve such a wonderful congregation. I also thank you for opening up your hearts to receive my ministry for these last 22 years. It has been a joy and a privilege to be your pastor. I pray that you would open your hearts in the same way to Pastor Luke and his family, giving them the same joy that you have so graciously given me.

God’s richest blessings!
 Pastor Jon



“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 made up of more than just small scraps of material. Quilt makers place their heart and soul into creating comfort for those who 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 creates a tangible message of love and caring to strangers in a far off land, 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 wishes to welcome you! If you are thinking about it, please know we will make you feel very much at home as we tie quilts for Lutheran World Relief! In this ministry of serving, we also set aside time to enjoy fellowship with one another with devotions and snacks!

Next meeting is Wednesday, December 18, 2024! You’re most welcome to join us. We will meet between 9:00 A.M. and Noon at St. John, in the Faith and Life Center. See you then! *And to one and all, Santa said, with a wink and a great big smile, Merry Christmas! Ho, ho, ho! And John 1:29 tells us: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!* For more information, please call Sue Pagan 712-



Good Times Group

Please join us for a ‘*Good Time*’ at our annual December gathering here at Saint John on Friday, December 13 at 6:30pm. A-H please bring an appetizer. J-Z please bring a dessert. Everyone can bring their favorite beverage. Contact Becky Henkel to RSVP. We hope to see you there!



Players Group

The Players will meet on **Thursday**, December 5 at 5:00pm at Tish’s.

Hosts are: Elaine von Gillern and Cookie Johnson. If you would like to join the Players at Tish’s, contact Elaine or Cookie.



<u>Nov. 30 / Dec. 1</u>	<u>December 7 & 8</u>	<u>December 14 & 15</u>	<u>December 21 & 22</u>
<u>December 28 & 29</u>	Cookie Johnson	Mary Lou Burke	<u>Christmas Eve</u>
Patricia Minchin	Becky Taylor	Norma Jones	Marlys Lien
Elaine von Gillern	Kim Pace	Joyce Mlynarik	Debbie Plugge
Carol Wood	Diane Hartman	Alan Meilike	Carolyn Clark
Andrea Hill			Sandy Cerveny



- * Esther Group—December 10 at 9:30am
- * Mary Group—December 12 at 9:00am



MEN’S GROUP

The Men’s Club meets every 3rd Thursday of the month at 11:30am at The Dock Bar & Grill, 401 Veteran’s Memorial Highway. Men of all ages are welcome to join us for a good lunch and great conversation. Next lunch is December 19.



We are requesting donations of cookies and crackers.



Please come participate in the creation of our St John's Tribute Tree and Rock Garden!

Christmas tree ornament materials will be available in the Faith & Life Center between services on Sunday, December 1 to make the tree decorations. You can create a personalized ornament to show your favorite memory, photo, message, gratefulness for this past year, or a wish for the New Year.

You are encouraged to bring photos for the tree to share the memories of loved ones.

Also available will be materials for us to create a Memorial Rock Garden where the name of a loved one can be written on a rock to share with others. A garden will be assembled for display.

For those unable to attend the event on December 1, there will be "to-go" kits available for you to create your ornament/rock at home. Please remember to share your creations by bringing them back to hang on the Tribute Tree or place in the Rock Garden.

Let's celebrate the wonderful memories of this season and share warm wishes for the New Year!

Thanks to Keith Tye for submitting this suggestion to the Service & Learning Group Committees."



Dear friends,

I hope this finds you safe and warm. As I am closing in on my first year as President and CEO at LSI, I am filled with gratitude for our generous donors, dedicated staff members, and kind supporters. Thanks to caring people like you, LSI had another incredible year serving our neighbors. Your donations ensured young parents had access to resources and support. Your in-kind items provided comforting beds for immigrants and refugees to rest upon. Your prayers lifted the spirits of our LSI team members and those we serve. As we enjoy this holiday season, I want to thank you for supporting LSI. If you would like to serve more neighbors in need, please give at LSIowa.org/donate.

Eternally Grateful,
Renee

For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 - Communion - 8:30am Worship 9:45am Tribute Tree / Rock Garden creations in the FLC 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship	2	3 7:00pm Praise Choir	4 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm Confirmation 6:30pm High school youth 7:00pm Advent Worship 7:30pm Chancel Choir	5 5:00pm Players Dining Group	6	7 Sunday School Christmas Road Trip Practice 8:30 - 10:00am "Cookies, Cocoa, & Jesus" 10:00 - 11:30am 5:30pm Worship
8 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship Sunday School Program 	9	10 9:30am Esther Group 3:00pm Foundation Board Mtg. 5:30pm Grief Group 7:00pm Praise Choir	11 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm Confirmation 6:30pm High school youth 7:00pm Advent Worship 7:30pm Chancel Choir	12 9:00am Mary Group	13 6:30pm Good Time Group	14 - Communion - 5:30pm Worship
15 - Communion - 8:30am Worship Baptism Laine Melvin 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship	16	17 7:00pm Praise Choir	18 Caller Mailed 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm Confirmation 6:30pm High school youth 7:00pm Advent Worship 7:30pm Chancel Choir	19 11:30am Men's Club	20	21 5:30pm Worship
22 Chancel Choir Cantata 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship	23	24  Christmas Eve Services 3:30, 5:30, 10:30pm	25 Office Closed 	26 Office Closed	27 Office Closed	28 5:30pm Worship
29 8:30am Worship 11:00am Worship	30	31				

Saint John Lutheran Church
Birthdays

December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Jamie Loose-Ives Addison Thompson BethAnn Wilson	2 Susan Stellish Elaine von Gillern	3 Rick Graham Wadie Thomas	4 Roy Adams	5 Mike Hartenhoff Hudson Maas	6 Nolan Phillips Margaret Schneider	7
8 Larry Califf	9 Beverly Jensen	10 Owen Reber	11	12 Henry Gerhardt Rick Nickerson Peggy Tye	13 Maxine Carlson	14 Ruby Fellows
15 Andrea Alderton Richard Neal	16 Stephanie Urbanek Jacob Warner	17 Dick Comley	18	19 Alisha DelSignore Cal Hartman	20 Megan Elam Susan Hartman Addison Nano Nancy Sales	21 Angela Elam Trevor Petersen
22 Steve Hansen	23 Jen Urlaub Steve Vander Helm	24 Luke Northwall	25	26 Curtis Pestel	27	28 Greg Brougham Joshua Burianek Cairrie Solon Layla Velasco
29 Catherine Sundermann	30 Keith Tye	31 Jane Lando				





*Celebrating
-WITH-
you*

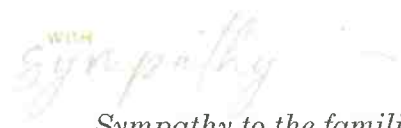
80th Birthday
Elaine von Gillern (Dec. 2)

91st Birthday
Beverly Jensen (Dec. 9)

93rd Birthday
Catherine Sundermann (Dec. 29)

96th Birthday
Roy Adams (Dec. 4)

97th Birthday
Maxine Carlson (Dec. 13)



Sympathy to the families of...

~ Janice Myers



ADVENT COLORS — One of the season's symbolic colors is blue, representing hope. During Advent, we wait in hope to celebrate again God's coming in human form. We also look forward in hope to Christ's coming in glory at the end of the age.

Purple symbolizes the royalty of Jesus, the coming Prince of Peace, and the penitence with which we receive him. Some congregations also use pink or white candles in Advent wreaths, with pink symbolizing joy and white symbolizing the Christ Child.

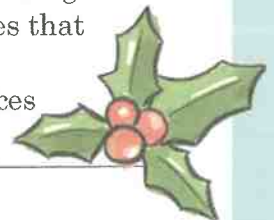


Thank you to all who contributed to the mitten tree! Items were delivered between Bloomer and Longfellow elementary schools. And some of the larger coats were delivered to the men's shelter. *Thank you Phyllis & Mike for delivering all the items!



Thank you to all who contributed to New Visions Homeless Services 'Give Hope' Christmas gift drive. They have many, many, many families that appreciate these gifts.

- New Visions Homeless Services



Saint John Lutheran Church Staff

- Senior Pastor: Rev. E. Jon Benson (JonBenson@SaintJohnELCA.org)
- Interim Pastor: Rev. Sharon Worthington (interimpastorsjlc@gmail.com)
- Parish Ministry Coordinator: Patricia S. Minchin
- Sound Booth volunteers: Mack Bertelsen, Paul Schmidt
- Chancel Choir Director: Elmer Ellefson
- Bell Choir Director: Laura Nelson
- Pianist / Organist: Joan Ebersold
- Foundation Board President: Ross Jensen (402-681-1383)
- Nursery Attendant: Susan Stellish
- Stephen Minister Leaders: Alan Meilike (328-1671) Debbie Plugge (256-5310) Pastor Jon Benson (323-7173)
- 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

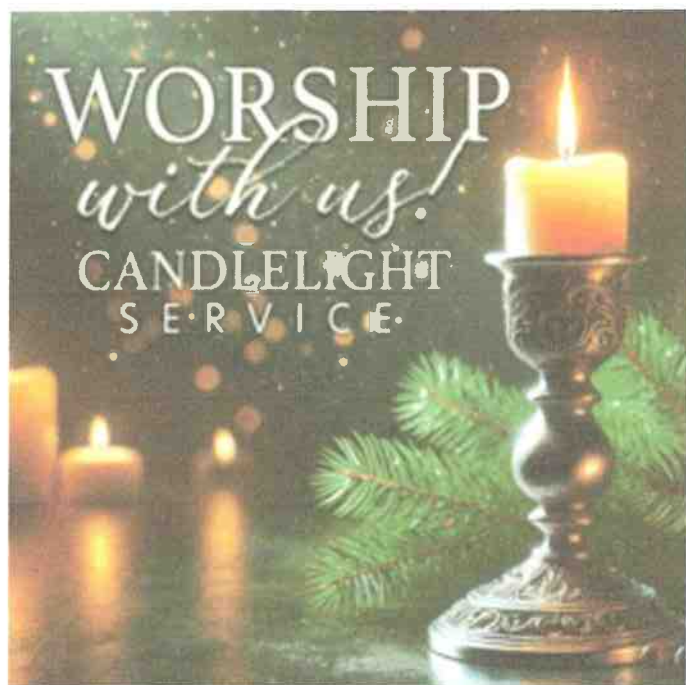
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Saint John Lutheran Church

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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.



Christmas Eve Services

3:30pm

5:30pm

10:30pm