



Pastor Luke Kuenzli



Pastor Jon Benson

Interim Pastor -
Pastor Sharon
Worthington

*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

Hello and blessings to all of you from the newest addition to St. John, Council Bluffs!

Thank you all for the warm welcome you've given me and my family. We are thrilled to be here to join you in serving God and our neighbors. As I get settled in, I thought that it would be good to tell you a little bit more about myself and my family. Some of you have parts of heard this through the Call process already, but not everyone was able to attend the Q&A before the congregational vote on November 9th. Rather than inundating you with all the info at once, I'll give you the basic stuff now, and include a section or two in subsequent *Caller* articles

Who Are We? I'm Luke Andrew Kuenzli; son of Tim (a retired ELCA pastor of German Swiss heritage) and Linda (a retired Art educator of Welsh/English heritage) Kuenzli of Pickerington, OH; youngest of 4 siblings (two older brothers and a twin sister); husband to Rachel since August 2010; father to Jeremiah (13, 7th grade), Isaac (11, 5th grade), Selah (8, 2nd grade), since their births and to Eden (4, Pre-K) and Esther (4, Pre-K) since their adoptions on November 19, 2023... and Pretzel, a 4-year-old, 20 pound "toy" red-tri Australian Shepherd.

Rachel's folks live in NW Iowa, where her mom works at Spencer Hospital and her dad has a small engine mechanic's shop. She's the 2nd of 4 siblings, with two brothers and a sister.

Education: Winton Woods High School in Cincinnati, OH, c/o '03

Capital University in Bexley, OH; B.A. in Religion, music minor, c/o '07,

ΦMA Sinfonia Fraternity

Ministry in Context at Jacob's Porch, Lutheran Campus Ministry at Ohio State University, '10-12

Clinical Pastoral Education at Ohio State University Medical Center, summer '12

Internship at First Lutheran Church in Muskegon, MI with Rev. Bill Uetrecht, Aug. '12- '13

Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Bexley, OH; Masters of Divinity, Global Church focus, c/o '14

Rachel has a BA from Simpson College & Master's in Public Health from Des Moines University. She completed her MPH Internship at Mills County Public Health.

Work History: I did lawn care and lifeguarding through high school and into college.

Camp Counselor at Camp Wapo and Ox Lake Bible Camp, Amery, WI, summers '07-09

Youth Encounter team member (traveling relational and music ministry)

New Dawn (East Coast & Midwest US, Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan) '07-08

Crossfire (East Coast & Midwest US, Cameroon, Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso) '08-09

Foreign Expert (English teacher) at Xinyang Agricultural College in Xinyang, Henan, China, '09-10

On-call Chaplain, Ohio State University Medical Center, '12-'14

Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Mineola, IA, September '14-December '24

Rachel has worked as a camp counselor; Youth Encounter team member (Crossfire to Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania in '07-'08); Activities Director at The Plaster House surgical rehabilitation hospital in Arusha, Tanzania; childbirth instructor with the Bradley Method; and substitute teacher. She works now with Lutheran Services in Iowa as a case worker to support foster care providers.

What I'm excited about right now: Getting to know you, the people of St. John, and figuring out together what kinds of ministry we can accomplish; making our new house our "home" in truth; my Buckeyes winning the CFP Championship (O-H...!); the February 15th Prime Rib Dinner to support our St. John Youth; no longer driving 25 minutes one-way to get kids to/from school; the cup of tea I'm drinking as I write.

As I indicated when I introduced myself on January 4 and 5, I will get to know your names and stories more quickly if I meet you in small groups or one-on-one. I'm humbled and honored to be your new pastor, and give thanks to God for this opportunity.

Peace <>, Pastor Luke

Saint John News



Sundays at 9:45am

Pre-K - 5th grade

Kids Singing -

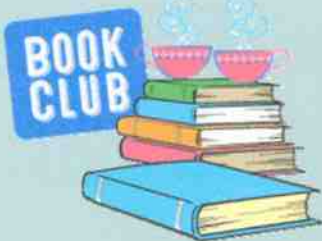
Feb. 23 at 8:30



Class on Wednesdays at 6:30pm



The High school youth are meeting on Wednesday nights at 6:30! Come and check it out!



Next book selection:

LIKE A RIVER
by Granger Smith

22 People joined our first book club meetings! Come and join the fun at the next book club meeting on **February 27 at 9:15am OR on February 16 at 6:00pm!**



LFS SHOE TREE - RALLY 4 KIDS!

Please bring NEW children's shoes to place on our shoe trees during the month of February! The trees will be auctioned off at Lutheran Family Services Rally for Kids Fundraiser on March 6.



New Member Classes

Classes to join Saint John will be held between services on Sundays, March 9, 16 & 23. New Member Reception will be March 30.



PRIME RIB
Dinner

Saturday,
February 15
at 6:30pm

Tickets for the Prime Rib Dinner are on sale!

Price per ticket is \$30.00

You can buy tickets between services, or in the church office during the week.

Deadline to buy tickets is February 9



TEAM ST. JOHN—

Are you ready for the Super Bowl!? The Super Bowl is a cultural event including football, fellowship, ads and - of course - snacks!

Join us between services, Sunday February 9 in the

FLC to create your own specialized snack tray. There will also be some scripture and trivia, let's see what you know! ***Please bring cans of soup** that will be used to vote for your favorite team to win. The soup will be donated to our community partners.

LECTOR / COMMUNION / GREETER SIGN UP -



Please consider being a steward of Live the Word by signing up to Lector, be a Communion Assistant or a Greeter. The sign-up sheet is located on our website! Go to the "SERVE" tab, then click on 'DURING WORSHIP' you'll see the button for Lector sign up. Pick a date that works for you! (Lector readings are mailed to you).



“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 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 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 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!

Save the date! Next meeting is Wednesday, February 19, 2025! 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! For more information, please call Sue Pagan at 712-325-0257.



Support our Youth!! The Good Time Group and The Players Group will be meeting up at the Prime Rib Dinner on January 15 at 6:30pm here at church!



Cost of tickets is \$30.00. The tickets can be purchased between services or in the church office during the week.



February 1 & 2
 Cookie Johnson
 Becky Taylor
 Kim Pace
 Diane Hartman

February 8 & 9
 Mary Lou Burke
 Norma Jones
 Joyce Mlynarik
 Alan Meilike

February 15 & 16
 Marlys Lien
 Debbie Plugge
 Carolyn Clark
 Sandy Cervený

February 22 & 23
 Patricia Minchin
 Elaine von Gillern
 Carol Wood
 Andrea Hill



* Esther Group—February 11 at 9:30am
 * Mary Group—February 13 at 9:00am



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 February 20.



We are requesting donations of cookies and pasta.



February reminds us of love. Love for the Lord, love for our partners, and love for friends and family. We offer you this story of the power of love between a mother and daughter.

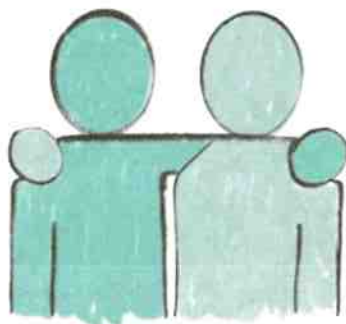
“Without Amy’s support, I would still be an addict, and I wouldn’t be where I am today,” said Michelle, an LSI client.

“God helps us in ways we don’t always want him to,” said Michelle. “When the coronavirus pandemic hit, I lost my job. The unemployment lines were long at the time, so we went several months without a paycheck, so I decided to get creative with my finances. I started selling drugs and was later arrested with a large quantity of drugs. They came in, took my kid, and I went to jail. After that, I was referred to work with Amy at LSI.”

Michelle and Amy worked through Michelle’s childhood trauma, processing the significant losses in her life due to drug overdose and death. Amy helped Michelle work on building a positive support system, a list of future goals, and a relationship with her daughter, Rachel.

“Rachel and I had a lot of problems when we entered therapy because I was a drug addict, and there was a lot of broken trust between us,” said Michelle. “LSI therapists helped us rebuild that trust and helped show her the progress I had made when she couldn’t see it herself.”

Rachel, in therapy as well, has been seeing LSI Therapist Chelsea Zaragoza since 2019. In addition to one-on-one therapy sessions with their respective therapists, Michelle and Rachel also do family therapy sessions with Amy and Chelsea. These sessions help the mother and daughter have time set aside to talk about issues they are having in a healthy, productive way.



“Michelle has had a lot of struggles, loss, and a lot of people who didn’t believe in her, and her daughter was one of them,” said Amy Davis, LSI Therapist. “We have worked hard doing family and individual therapy to bring those two back together, and it has worked. Where they are now, I don’t think I’ve seen a mother-daughter relationship as healthy as the two of them are.”

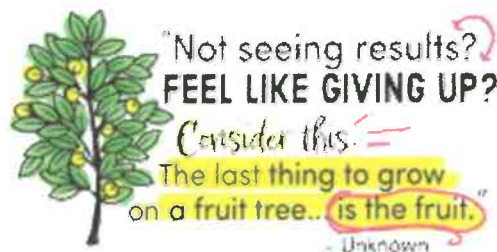
Today, Michelle has her daughter back in her home, she is thriving as a general manager at a coffee shop, and she is going to school for substance abuse counseling. She just received her one-year sobriety chip, and she has a good support system.

“To see how far Michelle has come since I met her is truly remarkable,” said Amy. “She built the ladder, and she climbed out.”

“I was a mess when I first came to LSI,” said Michelle. “Now, I’m sober, in college, have a high-paying job, and have my daughter back. Amy believed in me when no one else did, not even myself. She gave me hope.”




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

LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSIiowa.



FEBRUARY

Saint John Lutheran Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28 7:00pm Praise Team	29 Caller Mailed 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm Evening Bible Study 6:30pm High school Youth 7:30pm Chancel Choir	30	31	1 Communion 5:30pm Worship
2 Communion 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship	3	4 7:00pm Praise Team	5 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm Evening Bible Study 6:30pm High school Youth 7:30pm Chancel Choir	6	7	8 5:30pm Worship
9  8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School 9:45am Super Bowl Snack Making 11:00am Worship	10 6:45pm Seekers ChristCare	11 9:30am Esther Group 7:00pm Praise Team	12 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm Evening Bible Study 6:30pm High school Youth 7:30pm Chancel Choir	13 9:00am Mary Group	14	15  Communion 5:30pm Worship 6:30pm Good Time Group / Players Group at Prime Rib Dinner 6:30pm Prime Rib Dinner
16 Communion 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship 6:00pm Book Club 	17	18 7:00pm Praise Team	19 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am Quilting Group 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm Evening Bible Study 6:30pm High school Youth 7:30pm Chancel Choir	20 11:30am Men's Club	21	22 5:30pm Worship
23 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship	24 6:45pm Seekers ChristCare	25 7:00pm Council Meeting 7:00pm Praise Team	26 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am Caller Mailed 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm Evening Bible Study 6:30pm High school Youth 7:30pm Chancel Choir	27 9:15am Book Club 	28	1 Communion 5:30pm Worship

Saint John Lutheran Church
Birthdays

February 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 Tatum Swenson	3 Michelle Burianek Aubrey Nano Caden Nepple Macy Olson	4 Luke Meyer	5 Angelina Arnold Alyce Hassay	6	7 Brody Phillips	1 Neil Wilson
9 Carla Hartenhoff Daniel Mauch Jordyn Mauch Janet Perrone Becky Vander Helm Lisa Williams	10 Don Doebelin	11 Christian Hennessy Mary Zink	12	13 Tim Chew Todd Frush Jenni Roane	14 Sarah Arnold	15 Amelia Velasco
16 Rory Johnson	17 Michael Ives	18 Charles Senkbile	19 Phyllis Damgaard Wayne Jacobsen Liviana Riggs	20	21	22 Marci Phillips Wyatt Urbanek
23 Dan Boggs Emily Meador Quinn Meyer	24	25 Jenn Campbell Mark Jensen Levi Nelson Derek Townsend	26	27 Kim Pace	28 Paytyn Bingham Casey Walters Debbie Whitney	





Celebrating
-WITH-
you

97th Birthday
Alyce Hassay (Feb. 5)



Thank you

Thank you to our outgoing Council members, Andrea Alderton and Phil Hansen for their leadership and guidance during their terms.

Thank you for all the wonderful Christmas cards and for sending cards to celebrate my 100th birthday. Thank you so much! They were so very appreciated!

Kitty Richardson



to the families of...

- ~ Jeanne Blunk
- ~ Dave Baker
- ~ Jeanne Bodenstedt, mother of Anne Vorce
- ~ Gary Kalskett, father of Mary Mauch
- ~ Kumpong, sister-in-law of Dave Waymire

Baptism



Amelia Azile Kuenning and Willa Banks Kuenning were baptized on January 26.

Saint John Lutheran Church Staff

- Senior Pastor: Rev. E. Jon Benson (JonBenson@saintjohnelca.org)
- Senior Pastor: Rev. Luke Kuenzli (revluke@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

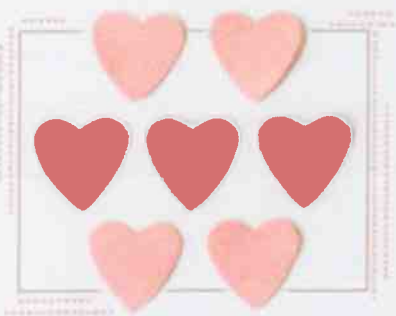
Email: Info@SaintJohnELCA.org ~ Website: www.SaintJohnELCA.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/SaintJohnCouncilBluffs

Saint John Lutheran Church

633 Willow Avenue
Council Bluffs, IA 51501-4242

Non Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Council Bluffs, IA
Permit No. 68
Zip Plus Four
Change Service Requested

Please email us
(info@saintjohnelca.org)
if you no longer wish to
receive this newsletter.
Thank you.

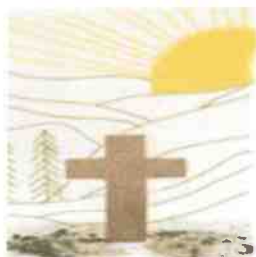


AND *now* these
THREE remain:
FAITH, HOPE & LOVE.
But the greatest of
these is LOVE.
1 CORINTHIANS 13:13, NIV



February

- 9th - Super Bowl Snack Making 9:45am
- 15th - Prime Rib Dinner 6:30pm
- 16th - Book Club 6:00pm
- 27th - Book Club 9:15am



Ash Wednesday
March 5
Chili Supper - 5:30pm
Worship Service - 7:00pm