



Saint John Lutheran Church  
Bellevue, Iowa  
*A Congregation of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

*Growing and responding  
every day as disciples of Jesus*

## FEBRUARY 2025

### WEEKLY WORSHIP

Saturday - 5:00 pm  
Sunday - 10:00 am

#### ~ ARK ~

Education with  
Children  
(Kindergarten—5th Grade)

#### ~ CONFIRMATION ~

Education with  
Youth (6th—8th)  
6:00-8:00 pm

#### ~ EMAIL ADDRESSES~

Office  
saintjohn.bellevue@gmail.com  
Pastor  
sjpastor.pp@igmail.com

#### ~ WEBSITE ~

[SAINTJOHNLUTHERAN.NET](http://SAINTJOHNLUTHERAN.NET)



**SAINT JOHN LUTHERAN  
CHURCH - BELLEVUE, IOWA**

**CHURCH PHONE:  
563-872-5849**

## Coming Events

**You Should Know About!**

**Lent Doesn't Begin  
Until March  
Ash Wednesday, March 5**

## What's **INSIDE** this **ISSUE**

**Highlights of our  
Annual Meeting**

**Ways you can help  
those in need.**

To view all the pictures in color with-  
in this newsletter, go to our website:  
saintjohnlutheran.net and click on  
newsletter.



## LOVE YOU

A young boy opened up his valentine from a girl in his class. On the front it had a picture of candy hearts with those one or two word sayings. On the back, the girl wrote, "Do you like me?" there were three boxes to check, "Yes," "No," and "Maybe."

In John 21, Jesus goes to Peter (Simon) and asks three times, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter said to Jesus, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep."

So often we hear people say, "Love you." Is it enough to say, "Love you" or do these words need to be backed up with actions that show your love?

We read in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son . . . " Yes, God didn't say, "Love You," but showed God's love for us by giving his only Son (Jesus) to suffer and die so that we would be forgiven of our sins and not perish but have eternal life.

True love is more than words. True love is demonstrated by genuine acts of love—compassion, kindness, caring, and forgiveness.

Jesus was asked which commandment is the greatest. He responded, "You shall **love** the Lord **your** God with all your heart and with all **your** soul and with all **your** mind." And then he added, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

To love God is demonstrated by our love for our neighbor as ourself. But who is our neighbor? Who are the sheep we are to tend? If we follow the example of Jesus, our neighbor and the sheep are those who are in need of our love—our acts of compassion, kindness, caring, and forgiveness.

So if God was to give you a valentine card with the question, "Do you love me?" Check:  Yes  No  Sometimes How will you respond? And will anyone know if it is "True Love" or simply words without meaning?





Jack Pitts .....	2/1
Phoenix Johnson .....	2/2
John Hinke .....	2/3
Tanner Michels .....	2/3
Paetyn Scheckel.....	2/3
Doug Payne.....	2/7
Eli Portz.....	2/7
Belinda Massingill.....	2/7
Steve Hachmann .....	2/8
Amara Malone .....	2/8
Kempton Sikkema .....	2/8
Trace Bonifas .....	2/9
Beth Norpel .....	2/10
Cheryl Budde.....	2/11
Jamison Spann.....	2/11
Andrew Michels .....	2/11
Andrew Penniston .....	2/12
Becca Fitzpatrick .....	2/13
Skyler Michels .....	2/13
Max Weis.....	2/13
Henry Higgins.....	2/14

Cheyanne Merrick.....	2/14
Aaron Hinke.....	2/15
Terry Long .....	2/15
Hannah Braet .....	2/16
Tinley Felderman .....	2/16
Dave Valant .....	2/16
Reese Decker .....	2/18
Lisa Dixon.....	2/19
Kadence Michels .....	2/19
Kati Ernst.....	2/20
Justin Bevan .....	2/21
Deanna Michels .....	2/21
Ariyah Clasen Small....	2/22
Ben Lawrence.....	2/22
Lucy Zeimet .....	2/22
Karen Osar .....	2/23
Janell Daugherty.....	2/24
Savannah Edwards.....	2/25
Landry Van Gorp .....	2/25
Dale Junk.....	2/28
Zachary Michels.....	2/28
Linda Nudd .....	2/28

*We apologize for any errors or omissions.  
If you notice any mistakes, please contact the church office.*

# Celebrating Their Wedding Anniversary

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Years</u>
Roger & Diane Michels .....	Feb. 1 .....	21
Corey & Brittini Peters .....	Feb. 10 .....	17
Steve & Dawn Dempewolf .....	Feb. 14 .....	27
Mark & Beth Rogge.....	Feb. 14 .....	25
Jon & Peggy Thoms.....	Feb. 14 .....	37
Keenan & Kylee Ploessl .....	Feb. 24 .....	1
Joel & Kay Ann Schroeder.....	Feb. 28 .....	32



## *Anniversaries—40 Plus Yrs*

<b>Feb. 8</b>	<b>Tom &amp; Glenda Meyer.....</b>	<b>66th</b>
<b>Feb. 20</b>	<b>Craig &amp; Joann Sieverding.....</b>	<b>42nd</b>
<b>Feb. 21</b>	<b>Dave &amp; Cindy Putman .....</b>	<b>54th</b>



**Bellevue Bread Basket**  
Served 38 families  
(95people)  
in January

## *Pastoral Acts and Rites Celebrated*



Baptism—December 29

**BRYDEN ANDREW SIEVERDING**

**Memorials & Gifts Received**  
**In Memory of**  
*Kate Bowman*  
Youth Bible Fund

### **Women's Circles**

*We invite all women to participate in one of  
our circles and benefit from our  
Bible studies and fellowship.*

**ELIZABETH CIRCLE:** No Meeting

**REBECCA CIRCLE:** Tuesday, February 25 @ 2:00

*Annual  
Congregational  
Meeting*

**OUR ANNUAL MEETING  
JANUARY 26, 2025**

**HIGHLIGHTS**



There were Thirty (30) voting members who gathered on Sunday, January 26 to participate in our Annual Congregational Meeting at 11:30.

Prior to the meeting, a light lunch was served of pulled pork sandwich and chips. Thanks to Marla Mootz and Chris Rolling for preparing the pork and to Diane Carson who overseeing the preparations and serving.

At this meeting the voting members affirmed **Sara Guenther, Laurel Ploessi, and Ashley Scheckel** to serve on the council for a two-year term (February 2025-January 2027). These three will join Joannie Kilburg (President), Shannon Abbott (VP), and Marla Mootz. Our treasurer will be Sara Guenther.

**Other Action taken by the voting members:**

- **Nominating Team:** **Kelley Humphrey, Todd Giesemann, Daniel Braet** volunteered and were approved to serve on the Nominating Committee that will meet in 2025 and make their recommendation for the 2026 council openings.
- **Synod Voting Delegates:** Since there were no volunteers to serve as our synod voting delegates, the approval was given to the council to identify and appoint our delegates to the in-person assembly in May.

- **Mission Support to Synod:** We approved to continue being a tithing congregation by giving 10% of our general offering for 2025 as our mission support to the Southeast Iowa Synod of the ELCA
- **2025 Mission Budget:** By a unanimous vote, we approved the 2025 Mission Budget for our church of \$203,494.00 in anticipated expenses. Our anticipated income for 2025 is \$176,190.00 which leaves us with a \$16,058 deficit.
- **Covering a Potential Deficit:** By a unanimous vote, we approved the decision to give the authority to the council to direct the release of up to \$10,000 from the Reserve Fund in the Designated Fund Account, and if an additional amount is needed up to \$10,000 from the Saint John Trust - Non-designated Fund to cover any deficit in the general fund. Total amount not to exceed \$20,000.
- **Cemetery Committee:** We affirmed **Todd Giesemann, Lorrie Both, Karen Osar, Jim Eggers, Mark Guenther, Marty Ploessl, and Kelley Humphrey** to serve on the Cemetery Committee.
- **Cemetery Budget:** By a unanimous vote, we approved the 2025 cemetery budget of \$8,795

At the close of the meeting the members shared their appreciation for the work of the council. We also express our thankfulness to **JoEllen Poll, Daniel Braet, and Jo Ernst** for their four years of serving on the church council.

**Special Recognition:** We also recognized and expressed our appreciation for **the 25 years that Ann Skoff** has served our congregation as our Office Administrator.



## CONFIRMATION NEWS

Besides attending Confirmation classes, every student is expected to achieve two (2) worship points each month. They can achieve these points by either attending worship in-person (1 pt.) or submitting an on-line sermon note (.75 pt) for the week.

Below is the list of students who achieved at least a total of eight (8) or more points for the months Sept.—Dec.

### 8th Grade

Claire Dempewolf	17.00
Trace Bonifas	11.25
Jocelyn Ries	10.75
Tempy Anderson	10.50
Carson Casel	9.00
Ali Dierks	8.50
Marcus Small	8.25

### 6th Grade

Addi Kutsch	11.00
Charlee Scheckel	9.75
Cambree Jess	8.00
Coy Schroeder	8.50
Aleyha Mootz	8.00

### 7th Grade

Tobias Humphrey	11.25
Brendan Booker	11.00
Fischer Johnson	8.00

The most points possible was 18.

**WAY TO GO to these 15 youth who achieved the expectation!**

This fall we had 39 students participating in Confirmation.

## Acolyte Assignment

Saturday		Sunday		
<b>Feb. 1</b>	Jocelyn Ries	<b>Feb. 2</b>	Aubrey Putman	Blake Putman
<b>Feb. 8</b>	Jax Eichhorn	<b>Feb. 9</b>	Marcus Small	Jackson Van Gorp
<b>Feb. 15</b>	Tobias Humphrey	<b>Feb. 16</b>	Brendan Booker	Fischer Johnson
<b>Feb. 22</b>	Casey Rowan	<b>Feb. 23</b>	Katie Sauser	Bently Ernst
<b>Mar. 1</b>	Zoey Bies	<b>Mar. 2</b>	Nora Fondell	Cambree Jess





## ARK NEWS

Our new year began on January 10 and it was good to have the children back at ARK. For the three weeks our average weekly attendance of 47 is down from the fall of 57. Some of this is due to illness.

Our weekly story (lesson) has followed the gospel reading in worship. It is our hope that hearing it in church will reinforce what they learn at ARK.

Below is the schedule for the coming weeks. We would hope that the parents take enough interest in their child's Christian education by asking questions about what they learned at ARK and by re-reading the story at home and talking about it amongst the family.

<b>ARK Schedule</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Story</b>	<b>Page in the Spark Story Bible (SSB) &amp; Bible Passage</b>
<b>Feb. 7</b>	The Beatitudes	SSB: p. 264 Luke 6:17-26
<b>Feb. 14</b>	Loving Our Enemies	SSB: p. 272 & 274 Luke 6:27-38
<b>Feb. 21</b>	The Transfiguration	SSB: p. 358 Luke 9:28-36
<b>Feb. 28</b>	<b>NO ARK—No School</b>	
<b>Mar. 7</b>	Satan Tempts Jesus	SSB: p 248 Luke 4:1-13



## SCHOOL KITS



Saint John has long had an Out-Reach program in its Quilting Group, which meets every Thursday morning from 9 til 11am. Working through Lutheran World Relief we make “kits” such as personal care, baby care, handmade quilts and School Kits!

Getting a School Kit ready to donate to Lutheran World Relief begins with obtaining the material. Sometimes we are lucky and someone donates suitable material. If not our group leader buys material with money from various sources. Out right donations, Thrivent Community Impact Cards and memorials.

Light weight denim, canvas, twill, corduroy & upholstery material may be used but no drapery. Also needed is ¼ “ rope for drawstrings. The materiel has to be cut into a rectangle 38” long by 15” wide. Two pieces 2”x4” are needed for the loops, and the drawstrings require 2 pieces of rope 2 yards each. Now Its time to sew.

Saint John donates 30 to 40 of these bags every year! Consider coming to Quilting and making a few. Go on the internet and learn more about Lutheran World Relief and Thrivent Community Impact Cards.

Thank you to everyone has given material & cash donations.



***HELP SUPPORT OUR  
QUILT TYERS!***

***BED SHEETS NEEDED***

Do you have any extra bed sheets in your house? The Saint John quilt tyers are in need new or gently used flat or fitted sheets. Donations can be left on the kitchen counter, or in the church office.

## DONATIONS NEEDED

Saint John Local/Global Outreach Committee is reaching out to our congregation in the month of February to collect necessary supplies for the Bellevue Bread Basket again this year. Our congregation was so helpful with this outreach last year, so we are collecting similar products again this year!



During February, and concluding the first week in March, we are asking our membership to help supply the following items:

- Liquid Laundry soap – no more than 100 ounces.***
- Dryer Sheets – 60 or 100 count***
- Dish Soap – No larger than 40 ounces***
- Deodorant (solid) – Men and Women***
- Shampoo – 16-28 Ounces***

Monetary donations are always accepted, and we will use these monies to purchase items we are lacking. Please make checks payable to Saint John Lutheran Church, and in the memo *Local/Global Outreach*. They may be placed in the offering, dropped off at church, or mailed.

Finally, if you choose to donate, please bring these items to church prior to *March 7*, so we are able to purchase items lacking. A designated area in the back of the church will be set up for drop-off.

Thank you for participating in this necessary cause for our community.

Local/Global Outreach Committee





## **SUMMER CAMP AT CAMP EWALU “GOD’S WORD COMES NEAR”**

Camp EWALU is an outdoor ministry of the ELCA located in Strawberry Point, Iowa. Over the years, youth from Saint John have participated and enjoyed the week-long Bible camp. EWALU provides a wide variety of camping experiences for youth from grades 2nd through 12th.

In the EWALU brochure we read that the value of Camp EWALU is: “A week immersed in Christian community at Camp EWALU is life changing! Parents responding to a recent survey saw positive changes in their child, with 95% saying that their child had fun at EWALU, 93% indicated their child tried new things, 83 % said that their child’s faith was strengthened and 65% mentioned that their child was singing the camp songs at home.

If you would like to see the opportunities and weeks available for a child, you can go to [www.ewalu.org/summer-camp](http://www.ewalu.org/summer-camp) or pick up a brochure in the back of the church.

In the past, Saint John has also provided financial assistance for campers. This assistance comes through donations and fund raising events. In order to receive assistance, the church office needs to be notified and the camper/parent will need to help with any fund raising events.

Camp EWALU states that NO child is turned away for reasons of financial need. There are camp scholarships available for those who inquire with Camp EWALU and talk with Diane (563-933-4700)..

### **DISCOUNTS:**

- **Early bird discount means \$40 off for most full-week youth programs to those who register by February 28**



## **SAINT JOHN RETREAT CENTER**

For over twenty years, people have rented Rickert Lodge for family gatherings, graduation parties, and bridal/baby showers.

The cost of renting the lodge for one day (8:00 am to 9:00 p.m.) is \$150 for Saint John's voting members and participating partners. [Voting member or participating partner is one who worships regularly and financially supports the church.] The non-member rental fee is \$200 per day.

There is a no alcohol policy at the Retreat Center/Lodge.

Those who would like to utilize the Retreat Center/Lodge for a wedding need to get the approval of the pastor. A wedding at the retreat center must have Saint John's Pastor or a pastor of the ELCA as the officiant.

The commercial use of the retreat center/lodge is not allowed.

If you would like to rent or learn more about the lodge, call the Office Administrator (Ann) at 872-5849 (M-F: 8-11, 12-3)

## PREPARING FOR LENT



### 2025 LENTEN JOURNEY BEGINS ON MARCH 5

Our midweek Lenten Worship  
will be on Wednesdays  
**4:00 p.m. and 6:15 p.m.**  
with "Holden Evening Prayer"

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**Burning of the Palm Strips**  
If you would like to include last  
year's palm strip that you took  
home in this year's ashes, **bring it**  
**to the church by Sunday**



### *Lenten Soup Suppers*

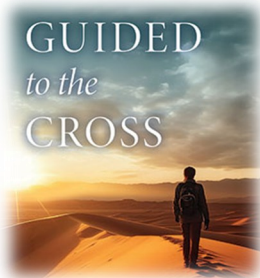
The Lenten Soup Suppers have been a tradition for many years. Not only do you get to enjoy home-made soups and desserts, you can enjoy good fellowship. We begin serving after the 4:00 service concludes (4:40) and continue to 5:50.



### **NEEDED:** **LENTEN SOUP MAKERS and DESSERT MAKERS**

**Soups:** If you would like to make a soup for one of the Lenten suppers, there is a sign up sheet at the back of the church. Each week we try to have two kinds of soup. Each soup maker would be responsible for making one **full** 18 qt. roaster. The cost of the soup can be donated or reimbursed.

**Desserts:** We also like to provide desserts at our suppers. If you are willing to make a dessert that **will serve approx. 15 people**, please sign up at the back of the church.



**Weekly Focus  
for  
2025 Wednesday  
Evening Lenten  
Services  
4:00 or 6:15**



This year, our midweek Lenten theme will be “Guided to the Cross.” Throughout our Lenten journey, we are drawn to Calvary—to the cross of Christ and in our journey we will discover how Christ serves as an example for us to live our lives.

**Our Weekly Focus for Our Midweek Worship will be:**

Ash Wednesday - Mar. 5  
**GUIDED TO FORGIVENESS**

March 26  
**GUIDED TO PEACE**

March 12  
**GUIDED TO HOPE**

April 2  
**GUIDED TO TRUST**

March 19  
**GUIDED TO LOVE**

April 9  
**GUIDED TO PERSEVERANCE**



# Direct Giving

## e-Offering

If you haven't heard about "e-Offering," it is one way of supporting the mission and ministries of Saint John by using an automatic withdrawal from your checking/saving's accounting. The amount and frequency is determined by the giver and can be change or cancelled at any time upon notification to the Office Administrator at Saint John.

Many of our people who use "e-Offering" to support the general fund have also supported other funds (i.e. World Hunger, ARK, Youth Bible, etc.) by using the pew envelopes.

What are the benefits for using 'e-Offering'?"

- ◇ "e-Offering" is a reliable and secure way to maintain your faithful level of support for Saint John.
- ◇ "e-Offering" helps avoid writing that larger check to catch up when you have been absent from worship for a period of time. Those who use 'e-Offering' find that their yearly level of support to the church increases because their offerings are not tied to their attendance at worship.
- ◇ "e-Offering" provides 'Snow-birds' with a sense of comfort knowing that they are still be contributing when they are gone for a period of time.
- ◇ "e-Offering" provides for a more constant receipt of offerings to pay the on-going expenses of the church.

The leadership of Saint John would encourage all members and participating partners to consider signing up for "e-Offering."

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## Weekly Worship Attendance & Offerings

Weekend of	Sat.	Sun.	Total	General Fund Offerings
December 29	31	44	75	\$2,847.62
January 5	40	60	100	\$3,317.18
January 11	49	49	98	\$2,734.18
January 19	44	35	79	\$1,791.06
January 26	21	77	98	\$1,465.12

### FINANCIAL REPORT

<b>General Fund Balance—12/27/2024</b>	<b>\$10,712.37</b>
<b><u>Income:</u></b>	
General Offerings	12,055.16
Cemetery Custodian Reimbursement	500.00
Misc. Income	64.67
<b><u>Budgeted Expenses:</u></b>	<b>(17,740.89)</b>
<b>General Fund Balance—1/27/25</b>	<b>\$5,591.31</b>

## **Saint John Council Minutes January 6, 2025**

**Present** - JoEllen Poll, Pastor Paul, Marla Mootz, Ann Skoff, Jo-annie Kilburg, Shannon Abbott, Daniel Braet, Jo Ernst

**Called to order** by President JoEllen Poll at 6:31 pm. Opening Prayer led by JoEllen.

**Agenda** - MSC to approve agenda.

**Council Minutes** - MSC to approve council minutes of December 2024 as printed.

**Reports** -

a) Financial - MSC to accept the Financial Reports as printed.

**Correspondence** - None

**Action by Email Vote** - None

**OLD BUSINESS** - None

**NEW BUSINESS** -

a) 2025 Mission Budget - MSC to approve the Proposed Budget

b) Recommendations for Annual Meeting - MSC to approve the recommendations

c) Agenda for Annual Meeting - MSC to approve

**Meeting Adjourned** at 7:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ann Skoff

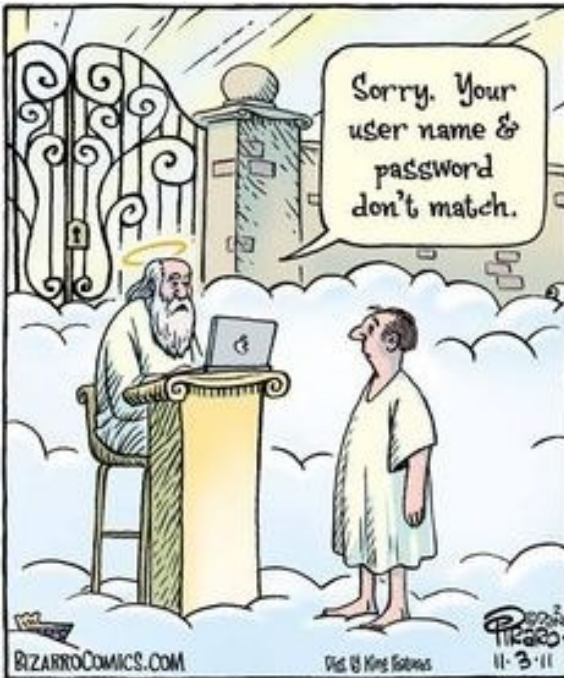
## A LITTLE HUMOR

**Why didn't they play cards on the Ark?**

Because Noah was always standing on the deck!

**Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?**

Samson—he brought the house down!



## GOD'S LOVE DISPLAYED

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

– ROMANS 5:8 NIV