

The Mustard Seed*

Newsletter for members and friends of
St. John's Lutheran Church, Waterloo
(Bennington) ELCA



2026



All of a sudden, we're staring September in the face! I used to think the summer was less hectic, but I'm not so sure anymore. On the street where I live, trucks have been rumbling up and down almost all summer as the high school gave the football field a big makeover.

I'm guessing your lives have been full, too: keeping up and/or keeping in touch. Wondering how family members are, spending time with loved ones, taking time to get away (which means preparing) and then coming back (which means unloading and doing the laundry and meal prep and so on). Working on special projects. And why is it that one thing leads to at a minimum at least 3 or 4 other things?! The story of "If you Give Mouse a Cookie..." (See pg 3)

September

- 2: 7 PM Confirmation starts for 8th grade class
- 6: **9 AM Worship with communion**
- 9: 7 PM Confirmation
- 12: 9:30 AM The Jordan Project
- 13: **WELCOME Sunday**
10 AM CHURCH
Potluck after worship
Service projects
LYO Meets at church
- 16: **7 PM Confirmation**
- 20: **9 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL STARTS**
10 AM Worship with communion/council after
- 23: 7 PM Confirmation
- 27: 9 AM Sunday School
10 AM Worship

October

- 4 9 AM Sunday School
10 AM Worship with communion
- 7 7 PM Confirmation
- 11 9 AM Sunday School
10 AM Worship
LYO after worship
- 14 7 PM Confirmation
- 18 9 AM Sunday School
10 AM Worship with communion/council after
- 21 7 PM Confirmation
- 25 9 AM Sunday School
10 AM Confirmation Sunday with communion
- 28 7 PM Confirmation

Sunday School News for Grades 4-5-6

Starting Sept. 20, SJB Sunday School students in grades 4-6 will have their own class and classroom!

We've worked hard over the past few years to grow our Sunday School, and now we're to the point where we can add this age group and they can have their own class. Hurray!

The curriculum we'll use is called "Connect" and builds in more hands-on learning activities. It also has a Bible specifically for this age group, which we will present to our third grade students.

Sunday School for the lower grades will divide preschool-kindergarten and grades 1-3. This is an exciting time, and we look forward to this next chapter in our life together.

Bethany will put out the call for teachers, too, for the lower grades. We're so thankful for all from the congregation who have taught our children in the past. YOU have shared the love of God with a child—what a gift.



***Why "The Mustard Seed?"** In Matthew 17 and Luke 17, Jesus said that mustard seed size faith is enough. God is the one who makes things happen! Even a little belief is enough from us! This newsletter is a little glimpse into life here at SJB. Enjoy! We're also on Facebook! Look for the church page and the youth and Sunday school page, too



After a summer away, our LYO group will start up on Sept. 13 at church. Come for the potluck!!

Kelli has been looking into some possibilities regarding the mat project, and the group will have a chance to get involved and give some feedback.

Ideas for the new year will be gathered and planning the 2026-27 year will be on tap. Come! Eat! Plan!

**LYO
Starts
Sept.
13!**

September 13: Welcome Potluck and Service Projects after 10 AM worship

Church returns to 10 a.m., followed by a **potluck** and service projects.

Indoor service projects will include assembling the LWR backpacks and working on the mat project to try and get another mat completed. **Outdoor projects** will include removing volunteer trees and trimming the lower limbs on some of the evergreens and hauling away brush. Tools for cutting/trimming, safety equipment and vehicles for hauling brush are welcomed!

Of course, another good thing about the potluck is the **fellowship** we enjoy with each other, so don't let the project part of the day keep you away from the potluck!

2026 SJB Education Scholarship Fund Recipients

Annually, St John's uses its education fund administered through the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa to make money available for post high-school education to applicants who qualify. 2026 recipients were Bethany Anderson, Kayla Rathe and Joey Snyder. We were pleased to recognize them in worship on Aug. 23

Church Council News Notes

SJB Council met Aug. 16. Reports received.

Pastor announced starting dates for confirmation, Sept. 2, and Sunday School, Sept. 20. The late date for SS start is due to how late Labor Day is this year; splitting out welcome Sunday and Sunday School start date works better for many SJB families.

Business tended to included discussion of size of firesafe needed, signing property contract for area SJB rents out for farming, issues related to the cemetery such as timeline for securing commitments for plots and being good stewards of land usage.

Propane contract discussed and waiting for note to come from Consolidated for 2027; Amy to forward information when available. Also touched on need for new tank regulators.

M/S/C to use from Helping Hands money to assist with the disaster that unfolded in Postville relative to the huge Agri-Star fire and also to send money to our sister ELCA synod in East Central Wisconsin to help with E3 tornado recovery efforts that ripped through area.

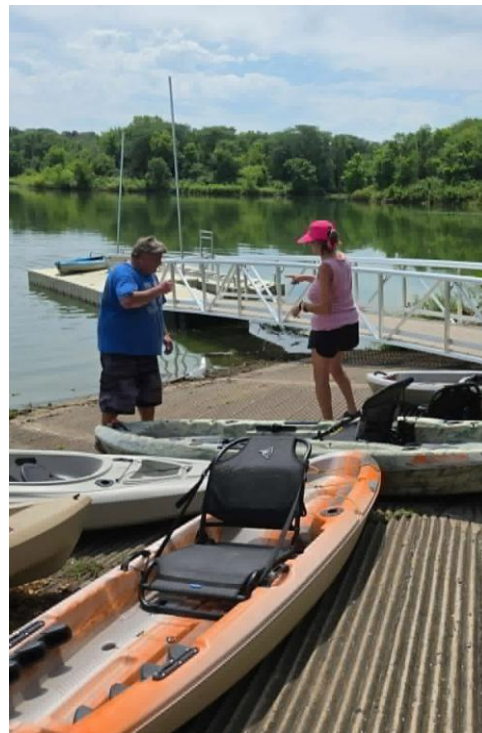
WELCOME Sunday is set for Sept. 13; will have potluck sign-up sheet for various categories.

M/S/C memorial for Bishop Ullestad be directed to LSI.

Worship CD player died; Alivia to talk with Bobbi about options.

SJB Kayaks!

Getting assorted kayaks and people into the water on July 27 was no small task. Event coordinators Dan and Deanne, below, were up to the task and got everyone on the water. More pictures of the afternoon are on St John's Church Facebook page, *St John's Lutheran Church Bennington*.





VBS 2026: Stellar Team Goes on Mission of Sharing God's Love in the World!

The above picture captures just about everyone who helped with this year's VBS. There are LOTS more pictures on the youth and Sunday School Facebook site, *St John's Bennington Lutheran Youth and Sunday School*. Lesson, dance party, crafts, games and pizza at church followed by a family pool party at the Tripoli pool made for a fun and meaningful afternoon. Thank you, all! Whether you helped out front or behind the scenes, we wouldn't have had the day we did without YOUR help! Thank you!

Olson, from pg. 1

applies to more than just books!

The refrain I've heard lately is "we're ready for a routine again." Routines bring security, comfort and a certain rhythm to our lives. To have our flow disrupted can be disorienting but we usually find our way—even amid new routines.

We're getting back into the groove here at church, too, as we turn our attention to fall schedules. Confirmation, Sunday School, 10 a.m. worship, meetings and gatherings—all are part of what we do.

There are some new things that we're looking forward to this year: our added class for Sunday School for the older students, meaning that we now have classes for littles, middles and bigs—our preschool-kindergartners, first-third graders and fourth-sixth graders. Younger students will start serving as acolytes.

We also have our Jordan Project team of Teresa Stafford, Jeff Seamans, Maggie Rottinghaus and Cassidy Fuelling launching in September. We're all taking on something that is new to each of us--not part of our usual routine. Please thank them for stepping out in faith and curiosity with this new venture!

As we get back into the groove this fall, please remember that we're always pleased to welcome new and familiar faces to St. John's. If you know of folks that are looking for a church, please invite them to join you! Your invitation might be just the ticket to help someone else find a place of belonging. Blessings to all!

--Pastor Beth





2026 Dates: Wednesday, October 14 – Friday, October 16

Theme: Wellness

Description: Our 3rd annual fall retreat for those ages 55+ at Ewalu's Stone Retreat Center! Join us for a featured speaker, carriage or wagon rides through the fall colors, time for reflection and renewal, optional hiking and chair yoga, and simple relaxation. Meals and lodging (2 nights) included.

Cost: Double occupancy (2 people sharing one room): \$175 per person
Single occupancy (1 person in a room): \$225

Arrival time: Wednesday at 4:00 p.m.

(supper at 5:30 p.m.) **Departure:** Friday at 11:30 a.m.

Guest speaker: Clara Buxton, MA, LMFT, will speak on mental and spiritual wellness.

Coming this Fall to EWALU

Quilt auction is Sept. 19.
Grounds open at 9, and auction starts at 1 p.m.

Learn more at www.ewalu.org



WHO: Grades 6-9 youth • **WHEN:** 8 p.m. Friday, October 16, through 11 a.m. Sunday, October 18 • **Enjoy** two nights of lodging in cabins, relevant Bible studies, quality meals & snacks, energetic camp counselors, active praise music, the High Ropes Course, campfires and much more. Grow in faith and meet new friends at Ewalu! **THE DETAILS** For groups with less than 10 youth, a chaperone is welcome and we'll work with small groups to have a suitable chaperone ratio. **Check-in** is Friday, October 16, from 8 to 8:30 p.m. This event will conclude on Sunday, October 18, at 11:00 a.m. **Lodging** is bunk bed style; bring your own bedding, bath towel and pillow. • **COST:** \$100/youth, \$75/chaperone • All lodging, activities and meals included!



The Mustard Seed

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