

The Mustard Seed*

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



2026



Wow! We're up and running for the program year! What an exhilarating month we've had! Three sections of Sunday School, a fuller sanctuary for worship, mission projects on a roll as we increased our backpack total to 50 assembled this year, another mat is on the loom to be woven together.

New rituals to help ground and guide us for the life of faith: Frolic First Bibles now being given at baptism and then Frolic Preschool Bibles for our 3 year olds as they enter Sunday School. The Connect curriculum for our Grades 4-6 learners, including lots of hands-on learning with each lesson. Our third grade students will receive the Connect (*cont. below*)

October

- 4** 9 AM Sunday School
- 10 AM Worship with communion/Bible Sunday
- 5** 7 PM Jordan Project Zoom with Coach Sarah
- 7** 7 PM Confirmation
- 11** 9 AM Sunday School
- 10 AM LYO Leads Worship/ Bible Sunday
- LYO after worship
- The Jordan Project group meets
- 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 Halloween Party: wear your costume! No scary masks.
- 10 AM Confirmation Sunday** with communion
- 28** 7 PM Confirmation

November

- 1** 9 AM Sunday School
- 10 AM All Saints Worship with communion
- 4** 7 PM Confirmation
- 8** 9 AM Sunday School
- 10 AM WELCA THANKOFFERING SERVICE with Anna
- Weepee sharing about her mission trip to Nicaragua; noisy offering
- 11** 7 PM Confirmation
- 15** 9 AM Sunday School: Begin Christmas program practice
- 10 AM Worship
- 18** 7 PM Confirmation
- 22** 9 AM Sunday School; Worship at 10 w/communion
- 25** NO Confirmation; Thanksgiving Eve
- 26** Thanksgiving, office closed
- 29:** NO SUNDAY SCHOOL; Worship at 10.

Bible, a kid friendly bible that encourages exploration and making real-life connections.

Our confirmation class continues with Colaborate and we use various media throughout the year as we learn.

On Reformation Sunday, Oct. 25, Lillian and Hannah will affirm their faith through Confirmation. Each young woman has made a faith project that we will display for the month of October.

By the time students have had two years of living and learning about being Lutheran, I expect them to be able to articulate something about faith that's meaningful to them. The students have a lot of latitude when it comes to creating their projects.

WELCA is gearing up for a big Chicken and Noodles dinner on the 4th Sunday of September. They've had a tremendous response from all of you for that meal, so thank you for getting on board!

God is at work here at St. John, and I'm so thankful you're part of it! There are places yet to plug in as we look ahead.

In writing this month's article, I realized that we start our sixth year of ministry together. Wow! It's been an amazing time together in God's grace. Thank you for your partnership in ministry. Together, we're making a difference for many!

--Pastor Beth

***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



October 11: LYO Leads Worship

SJB has established the pattern of the youth group leading worship in October. This year, that will be Oct. 11. Kelli will be in touch about the readings, prayers and other leadership parts.

LYO will then meet after church to elect officers and plan for the remainder of the year.

Church Council News Notes

Council met on Sept. 20. Meeting opened with prayer. Reports were reviewed and received. Giving has remained strong, a cause for deep thanks to the whole congregation.

Pastor updated on various projects related to God's Work Our Hands, The Jordan Project meeting and the schedule for mission collections for the remainder of the year.

Sunday School, confirmation and youth group have started.

Deacons shared concerns about the peeling wallpaper in the women's room.

Trustees will start trimming bottom of evergreens for ease of mowing access.

-- Will consult about new water fountain that WELCA Chicken & Noodles dinner hosts on Sept. 27.

Old business: propane contract addresses. MSC to contract with Consolidated as well as to seek answers regarding tank status (does SJB own the tanks or rent them?)

Tabled further conversation about cemetery space concerns & deposit timeline.

New business: it's time to start gathering names for 2027 slate of council. Needed will be deacon, secretary and treasurer. C. Hesse agreed to stay on as Trustee for second term.

Discussed Portico health benefits for pastor and the increased cost of insurance; monthly increase could be roughly \$162. Final total will be known once 2027 compensation package is worked out.

Working to schedule budget prep process to include treasurer, financial secretary, president, vice president and pastor.

Meeting concluded with The Lord's Prayer. Next meeting is Oct. 18.

Mission Collections for Rest of Year

Our mission collection bench rested in September as we regrouped for the program year after a marvelous summer of being at work in the community and the world through our projects.

Here's what's on tap for the remainder of the year as we seek to make a difference for others as part of sharing God's love:

October will see us partner with **Dunkerton Schools** to help supply "grab and go" snacks for the **school snack closet**. These snacks are for any student grade Preschool-12 who may have missed breakfast or may need a little extra during the day.

We are asking for **cereal bars, breakfast bars, boxes of individually wrapped crackers, fruit snacks and small bottles of water**.

Nurse Abigail also reminds us "Please choose items that are **individually packaged, shelf-stable, and do not require refrigeration**. Please also **avoid snacks containing peanuts or tree nuts** when possible."

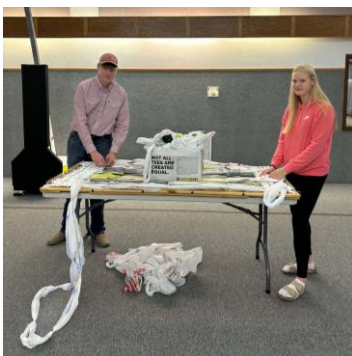
Thank you, St. John's for your help!

November will see us partner with the Salvation Army Free Clinic and Kelli Snyder's Athletic Training students at UNI. They offer a clinic that works with the local homeless population.

Our mission collection will be **hats, gloves and mittens** for adults. We'll also be applying for a Thrivent card with this project.

December, WELCA will lead us in the **Christmas Family** project. Watch for gift tags and more information as that time draws closer. Part of that collection has typically included an ingathering of blankets, also.





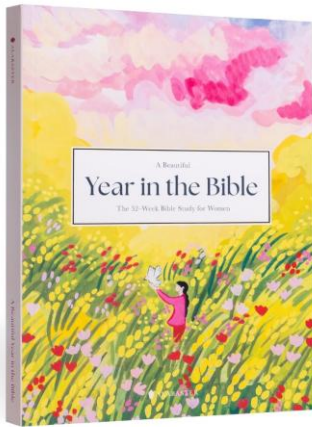
Snippets from Sept. 13 Welcome Sunday

We hosted a potluck following our return to 10 am church and then engaged in service projects.

This year we packed 50 backpacks, a 25% increase thanks to your generosity! We made more plarn (plastic yarn) and continued weaving a sleeping mat. Outdoor projects were rained out.

Joanie Reiter, pictured above, had one of the best gigs of the day as she held one of the Kuenstling twins.





Coming in 2027--A Beautiful Year in the Bible: The Fifty-Two Week Bible Study for Women.

During the chicken and noodles dinner on 9-27, a number of women looked over this bible study book that had been included in The Jordan Project resource materials.

After getting the thumbs up from many, the plan is to go ahead and launch an in-person study in the new year. Details are still being worked out, though the intent is to gather monthly.

Why this book?

-- It's richly and whimsically illustrated, for one, in ways that draw readers in with its lush and bold colors.

--It gives a defined reading plan for each day that's do-able for people with full lives.

--It has a reflection that flows from the readings.

--There are questions that allow a deeper dive.

--You can get the book for your own resource without committing to the study group, too!

Copies are available on Amazon, in both paperback and spiral bound formats. Be watching for details as the time gets closer.



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