

The Mustard Seed*

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



2026



A couple of days before that 3/14-15 round of snow, sleet and rain came in, I'd noticed my bulbs coming up. I was excited! Crocus, hyacinth, daffodils, tulips were all poking through in the sunniest spots of the garden. Then the weather whammy. So far, the plants are looking good, despite the temperature changes.

We're on the cusp of the Easter season—a different kind of new life that comes our way. The gifts of God (See right)

that come from this particular season of the church year take root deep in us—in our hearts, our lives, our beliefs, our hopes, our joys and our gratitude's. Those gifts of Easter survive the storms in our lives, too.

New life, hope, resurrection, gratitude, self-giving love. All of these and more come from the good news that is Easter.

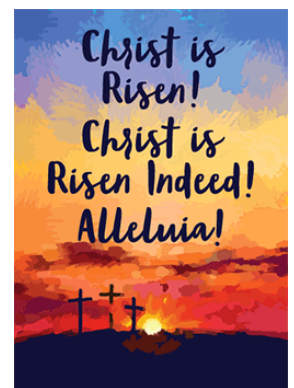
A number of years ago, I gave a speech in which I said that we as a church are at our best when we are giving ourselves away for the sake of others. I still believe that.

As a congregation, we are lucky to be able to share so much of God's Easter love with so many as we bless kits and quilts; as we care for others; as we remember that we are not just in this thing called life for ourselves.

Those Easter gifts that survive life's storms are also meant for us, too. As the

land comes visibly alive with spring, as the winter blahs and blues become by-gones, as the spirit starts stirring your

heart and reviving you for renewal, I pray that you will find opportunities to take to heart the good news for you that Christ is, indeed, risen.



Key dates to be aware of:

April

- 2: 7 PM: **Maundy Thursday** worship with first communion
- 3: 7 PM: **Good Friday** worship service
- 4: 7 AM: **Festive Easter Worship** with communion and LYO Easter Breakfast afterward and Egg Hunt
- 6: Easter Monday—Office closed.
- 8: 7 PM: Confirmation
- 11: 9 AM: Sunday School; 10 AM: Worship; LYO Meets after worship
- 15: 7 PM: Confirmation
- 16: 9AM - 3PM: Synod Day of Renewal
- 19: 9 AM: Sunday School 10 AM: Worship with communion & Sunday School Sing and Share; Council Meeting
- 22: 7 PM: Confirmation
- 26: 10 AM: Worship
11:30-1 PM Last day of Sunday School party at WTTC-Farm Site; if able, please bring a favorite snack to share for lunchtime.
- 29: 7 PM: **Last Day of Confirmation**; 8th graders get faith project assignments

May

- 3 10 AM: **Worship with graduate recognition & holy communion; reception for seniors after worship**
- 10: 10 AM: Worship
- 17: 10 AM: Worship with Holy Communion
- 24: 10 AM: Worship
- 31: **Worship Time Changes to 9 a.m.**

*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

Church Council Highlights *(full minutes are posted on the board in the small conference room.*

(Council meeting postponed one week due to March 14-15 blizzard.) Church council met Mar. 22 and opened with prayer. Received minutes and financials.

President Bedard requested leadership directory be made for the current year; pastor will get that going with Brenda.

In old business, training a person to serve as financial secretary back-up is proceeding. Time-sharing duties is TBD.

Also, office needs were discussed: additional cabinet with countertop and task specific storage to be addressed.

Update on the camera access usage policy is pending distribution of a rough draft from Chris H.

In new business, council voted to use Helping Hands funds to assist Anna Weepie with her medical mission trip to Canilla, Guatemala, May 24-June 2.

This venture is in partnership with Adonai International Ministries, an established agency that provides healthcare services in rural Guatemala.

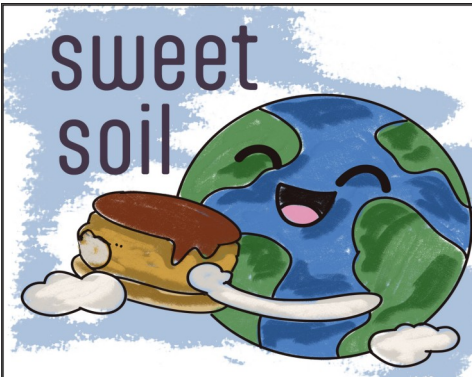
Weepie, a member of the nursing faculty at Allen College, and a cadre of nursing students from Allen College, will team up with the missions team from Prairie Lakes Church for this trip.

In addition to tending health care needs, those on the trip will provide a VBS experience for the children of the missionaries on-site and give some special attention to those of the missionary staff who give so much of themselves for others.

Looked ahead to upcoming Holy Week services and worship personnel needs. Also noted summer events coming.


Earth Day is April 22

Enjoy God's good creation with this layered snack! Talk about ways you already care for the earth—recycling, water usage, good land practices and more! Thank God for this home we share!



sweet soil

This snack's layers mimic properties of our planet's crust.




What you need:

- 1 cup rolled oats
- ½ cup nut butter (divided)
- ½ cup chocolate chips
- Microwave-safe bowl
- Silicone mini baking cups

What you do:

1. Combine the oats and ⅓ cup of the nut butter. Mix until oats stick together.
2. Place 2 teaspoons of oat mixture in each baking cup. Press with a spoon. Freeze for 10 minutes.
3. Spread remaining nut butter atop the cups. Freeze for 10 more minutes.
4. Microwave the chocolate chips 30 seconds. Stir and keep heating for 30-second intervals until melted.
5. Spread melted chocolate atop the cups. Freeze until chocolate is firm.
6. Remove from the molds and enjoy! Refrigerate leftovers in an airtight container.



Here's What's Coming:

Battle for Betsy Fundraiser at Carlos O'Kelly's Apr. 28

Tuesday, April 28, you can help the Battle for Betsy Foundation raise funds to support the Alzheimer's Association. Order online using the coupon code Carloscares and 25% of your order will support this worthy cause. Valid only at the University Ave. Carlos O' Kelly's.

Mission Collections for the summer months:

In May, we'll continue to collect paper products for the Dunkerton Food Bank. We've got a strong start already, thanks to your generosity!

In June, we'll ask for donations of treats (store bought or home made) for the annual Alive and Running 5K that Dunkerton hosts to raise awareness of suicide prevention training and also to remember those who have died by suicide.



In July and August, we'll invite you to donate materials for the school kits we assemble in early September.



Blessing Kits and Quilts

On March 22, we blessed the LWR kits and quilts SJB assembled. The Monday quilters, with help from your donations of fabric, made 65 quilts. Pictured here are some of the quilts, put out by Denise and also by the confirmands. The confirmation class helped haul the boxes of kits and quilts to the sanctuary for the blessing and then helped put them away until the April 11 collection drive..

We're sending 40 school kits with the LWR drive, also. We collect school supplies in July and August and then assemble the bags at our "God's Work. Our Hands" Churchwide day of service in the fall.

With garage sale season coming, we invite you to be on the lookout for sheets, big pieces of fabric and pillowcases. We're always happy to receive those donations! We do mainly sheet quilts, but there are also some pieced tops.

Thank you for your support of this vital ministry. Videos with heartwarming stories about the difference LWR kits and quilts make can be found by zipping around the LWR website, lwr.org, or by looking on YouTube for LWR videos.



LWR Stats from 2025:

In 2025, Lutheran World Relief distributed kits and quilts in 15 countries, including the USA. Here's a snap-shot of LWR and your love in action:

315,818 quilts

179,200 school kits

231,811 personal care kits

66,984 baby care kits

9,368 fabric kits.

Kits are shipped from either the Minnesota warehouse or the Maryland warehouse.

LWR's approximate cost to transport, process, store and deliver one of the above items is \$4.00/per.

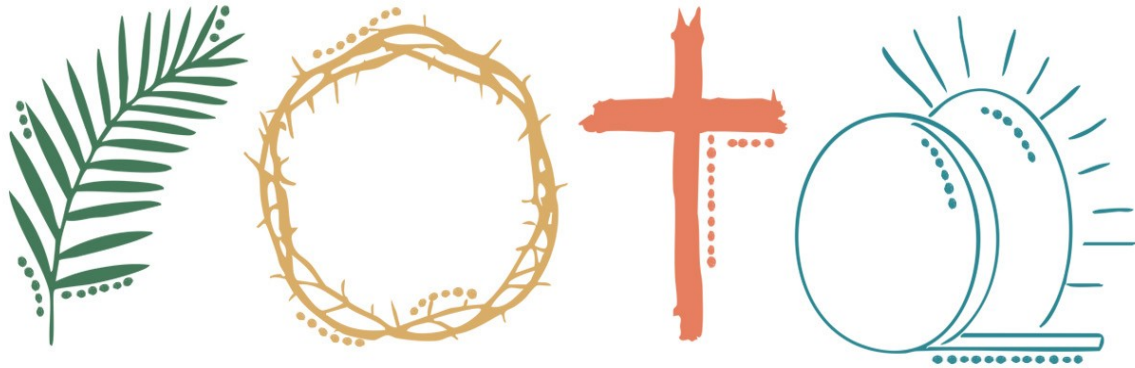
In America, there are partners in 12 states for rapid deployment of assistance.

(Information gleaned from LWR 2026-2027 Quilt and Kit Ministry Guide.)



Holy Week and Easter Schedule: You're invited!

March 29, 10 AM Palm Sunday. **April 2, 7 PM:** Maundy Thursday with first communion. **April 3, 7 PM** Good Friday, scripture, song and reflection, **EASTER SUNDAY, 7 AM**, followed by LYO Easter breakfast and children's egg hunt. Christ is Risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!



A lot can happen in
seven days.



The Mustard Seed

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