

The Mustard Seed*

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



2026



May is upon us. So is graduation season. For the church, we're pleased to be able to honor our graduates and to affirm them as they move into life after high school. We'll continue to pray for them, to welcome them, to cheer for their successes, to support them through their challenges. We look forward to seeing what they accomplish!

Graduation season is also a time for families to reflect, to celebrate getting this far. Despite our best efforts and our good intentions, it simply isn't possible to teach our children everything they need to know as they make their way further into the world. We pray they keep learning!

The adults in their lives have tried to give them tools for the life toolbox. Tools such as paying attention, listening, asking questions, seeking out help when needed. Tools such as good communities and reliable friends. Tools such as the importance of safe spaces and trusted mentors. Tools such as listening to their own inner voice. And more!

We also hope, trust and pray that the church has equipped them. Equipped them with the knowledge that they are loved by God no matter what; that they always have a place at SJB; that their voices matter; that faith and love, grace and hope, forgiveness and joy are gifts to be both savored and shared. Go with God's blessings, dear graduates!

May: Mission Collection, Paper products

- 3 **10 AM Worship with graduate recognition & holy communion; reception for seniors after worship; Care Callers meeting**
- 10 10 AM Worship
- 17 10 AM Worship with Holy Communion
- 24 10 AM Pentecost Worship; color of the day is **RED**.

31: Worship Time Changes to 9 a.m.

June: Mission Collection: Snacks for Alive and Running

- 1: **SJB Scholarship applications due.**
 - 6: NE Iowa Synod Shrink Smart Collaborative Congregations
 - 7: 9 AM Worship w/holy communion
 - 13: 3 PM (Sage (Neil)/Sage Vow Renewal
 - 14: 9 AM Worship
 - 21 9 AM Worship w/holy communion; council afterward
 - 28: 9 AM Worship
- Upper Elementary Sunday School Brainstorming session

July Mission Collection: School supplies for LWR kits.

August: Vacation Bible School.



Anna Weepie to go on Medical Mission Trip

Anna Weepie will be in Canilla,

Guatemala, with Allen College nursing May 24-June 2. While there, she will be part of a team that partners with Prairie Lakes Church and Adonai International Missions.

While there, they will provide care for the community, host a VBS for area children, and give the long-term missionaries serving some TLC.

Prayers are especially welcomed. St John's contributed financial support from the congregation's Helping Hands budget line item.

Persons wishing to support Anna directly may also do so. Anna will also share stories and insights from her trip at a date yet to be determined.

***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.



Pictured from April: Above: Easter breakfast crew. Right and middle left: Family time. Middle right: Shipping off 70 quilts and 40 school kits for LWR. Bottom: Practicing our Sing and Share with Ms. Deanne for worship.



Sunday School wrap up: hayride, trampoline time, foam block fun, giant jenga, food, games, friends and more. Too much to show here! Thank you, everyone!



Thank you, St John's!

Thank you to the congregation for your offerings of time, talent and treasure to make the education and youth program happen here. We have terrific volunteers who create lessons, teach music, plan, organize and include our children. YOU help make that possible through your commitment to God, this congregation and your generous offerings. Thank you!



The council met April 19. Reports given and approved; March minutes to be emailed again due to reception glitch.

Council approved Pastor getting a bigger chalice to be used for communion.

Kayla to follow-up with Kelli about scholarship process for SJB Education Scholarship.

Spring preparations are underway for the Trustees: lawnmowing, tree trimming in timely fashion, dehumidifiers are on the docket. Will look into ballasts on uplights in fellowship hall.

Reviewed camera access first draft. Looking to replace the current Zoom service with Arlo which will improve access. Proceeding with extra cabinet with work surface countertop for office.

Discussed property line marker and having something on file in office about agreement for family that leases field adjacent to parking lot. SJB property extends 150' from stake.

Synod gathering to hear about Iowa Shrink Smart on June 6.

M/S/C to increase holiday pay for accompanists to \$125.

M/S/C for Chris to coordinate/pay 2-3 high school students to fill holes and clean up church grounds.

Revisit at June 21 meeting the matter of tile lines to help with soggy corner of property next to building.



SJB Scholarship Time

The St John's Education scholarship application goes live on May 1 on the church website, www.stjohnsbennington.com **Applications are due June 1, no exceptions.**

The review and decision process will be completed by July 1, and eligible applicants notified thereafter.

Applicants must have at least one semester of post-high school education under their belts before they can apply. Go to the website for more information.

We will also recognize our scholarship recipients at a worship service TBD.

"One of Those Days" and An A-Plus Answer

Twelve-year-old Daniel was doing his best to test the patience of his mother, the Rev. Ann Lewis. He pushed back on every request, and the tension in the room kept rising as he refused to cooperate.

Finally, his mother reached her limit. Looking at him firmly, she said, "Daniel, you have tested me to my limits."

Without missing a beat, Daniel grinned and replied, "Yes! And you get an A-plus."



From Iowa State: Iowa Shrink Smart

On Saturday, June 6, Dr. Megen O'Toole from Iowa State University, will be at the Synod's Creative, Collaborative, Congregations event in Waverly.

One of the big questions of our time is how to build more resilient rural communities.

O'Toole will address that issue and will share demographic trends and ways that contracting communities are working together to care for one another and make life better for all.

Cost to attend the event, which runs from 9 am-3pm at St. Paul's in Waverly is \$50. SJB will cover the cost of registration, but you must let us know by May 17 of your interest and intent to go.

Summer Newsletter Schedule:

There will be a stand-alone newsletter in June.

The July-August issue will be a combined one, so please get information in accordingly.

Things to note: Alive and Running 5K treats will be gathered in June for the June 20 5K that starts at 7:30 a.m.

July will see Dunkerton Days and the parade. Float crew and helpers will be needed. Theme for 2026 is "Great American Birthday Bash."

August will be VBS, so be watching for details about what is becoming an annual event for SJB. Helpers will be needed, too!

School supply collection for LWR School Kits will be during July and August.

LSI: A Story from a Grateful Family

“We first learned about LSI’s school-based therapy program through our son’s school counselor. We had wanted to get him into therapy for a long time, but it often felt out of reach. We do not have many extra resources, and finding a provider in Dubuque with availability for a child under 12 was incredibly difficult. On top of that, we both work and did not know how we would manage getting him to appointments during or after the school day.

When we found out that therapy could take place right at his school, it truly felt like an answer to our prayers. He did not have to miss much class, we did not have to take time off work, and he was able to meet with someone in a place where he already felt comfortable.

Even after getting connected, we still had concerns. Our insurance included a copay that was difficult for us to afford. LSI let us know that financial assistance was available to help cover those costs, as long as we remained committed to his treatment. That support made all the difference. Without it, I do not think we would have been able to continue.

Our son has only been in therapy for about six weeks, but we are already beginning to see small changes. He seems to be learning new ways to manage his emotions and is starting to talk more about what is bothering him instead of shutting down or acting out. We know he still has a long road ahead, but for the first time in a long time, we feel hopeful.

We are so grateful for this opportunity and for the support LSI has provided to our family. Without this program and the financial assistance, I truly do not know if our son would have been able to receive the help he needs.”

NOTE: Lutheran Services in Iowa provides therapy services to all 99 counties through in-person location and online sessions. Your support helps many.



The Mustard Seed

St. John’s Lutheran Church (Bennington)

4110 East Mount Vernon Rd

Waterloo, IA 50703

worship@stjohnsbennington.com

319-291-6225

Web: www.stjohnsbennington.com

Facebook: St John’s Lutheran Church Bennington;

St. John’s Lutheran Bennington Youth and Sunday School