

St. John's Lutheran Church Newsletter

**Interim Pastor
Mark Oehlert**

HELLO
March 2026



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“Create in me a clean heart O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Psalm 51:10-11

As we are now deep into the Lenten journey, how is it going for you? Have you made a commitment to fasting this year? It is interesting to see all of the various ways God’s congregation called St. John’s has chosen to live into our shared faith journey this year. If you have not chosen a faith practice yet, it is not too late. Check out the newsprint on the tri-pod in the narthex at church where there are examples of what many have decided to take on during Lent. If you have not already, share your discipline by writing it on the newsprint.

The disciplines of Lent, (including Sunday and midweek worship) such as almsgiving, fasting and prayer, are ancient and yet always new practices that deepen our spiritual lives. As I had mentioned at the Ash Wednesday service, it is good to think about the big picture on occasion. Once we “remember that we are dust and to dust we shall return” a deeper appreciation for life unfolds. Making peace with our mortality broadens our perspective on daily life as we come to depend on God, our Creator Sustainer, for all of life here on earth as well as the hereafter once our earthly walk is done.

Taking the long view frees us to live with a renewed commitment to the exact values Jesus teaches us rather than the many ways contemporary culture tempts us. The ways of Jesus teach us the following: 1) taking care to see that the poor have food, clothing and housing, fulfilling God’s plan that humans are cared for, 2) fasting that helps deepen our relationship with God, increases self-control and develops humility, an attribute in short supply in our day and time, and 3) daily prayer – a practice that centers us and helps keep our focus on the previously mentioned “big picture” which brings a greater awareness of God’s presence in daily living along with inner peace and a stronger sense of purpose as we journey day to day.

If you have engaged in these faith practices this Lent, carry on! If you have not done so, it isn’t too late. Start today! Doing so now will bring a heightened awareness of the holy in your life as well as deeper joy when we celebrate the great three days that end with the resurrection of our Lord on Easter morning. Gather each week at St. John’s! Make time for the practices of Lent! You will be glad you did!

Lenten blessings to one and all,
Grace and peace,
Pastor Mark Oehlert

Office Hours: Mondays following the first and third Sundays, from **9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.**, with adjustments as needed.

Appointments at other times—at church, in homes, or at other mutually agreed-upon locations—are always welcome. You may call the church office 563-568-3623 to schedule a time.

Contact Information: Pastor Mark Oehlert | pmsoth@gmail.com |

Circle News

Sarah Circle Taking the winter off. See you Tuesday, April 14 at 9:15 am!

Dorcas Circle will meet virtually at 7 pm on Tuesday, March 10.

LYO Youth Ministry Team

Please join us for supper before Lenten services. LYO will be having casserole suppers during Lent, February 25, March 4, 11, 18, & 25. 5:30-6:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!

Youth News!

In February the; Confirmation class spent a night of fellowship at the Waukon Wellness Center. The youth enjoyed pizza, prayer, and dodgeball. LYO went skiing to Mt. LaCrosse. More pics from these events are

on our web page.

Quilting

Love quilting or want to learn?

Join us beginning Wednesday, March 4, from 8:45 am to noon in the parish hall for a morning of stitching and fellowship. Whether you're experienced or just curious, we'd love to have you. Come stitch with us — everyone is welcome. Bring a friend!

Thank you to the Dahlstrom family for the generous donation of fabric from Marlene Dahlstrom's estate. Your thoughtfulness and generosity are truly appreciated.

Meatball Supper

Meatball supper will be Wed, April 1, 4:30-7:00 pm. Stay tuned for details as the committee is hard at work on this church activity. Proceeds in the past have helped with the building fund and other church projects.

Growing Hope Globally—Corner of Hope

More about the presentation held on Feb 22, Mark Swanson is a Regional Director (Upper Midwest & West Coast) for *Growing Hope Globally*, *Growing Hope Globally* provides an opportunity for Christians to make a lasting impact on global hunger, linking the grassroots energy and commitment of rural communities in the U.S. with the capability and desire of smallholder farmers in developing countries. Previously he was a pastor serving churches in South Dakota and most recently Washington state, where he led a Growing Project with *Growing Hope Globally*. Mark and his family live in Decorah, Iowa.

Key Details about the Allamakee County Corner of Hope include: **Focus:** Agricultural projects to fight hunger. **Purpose:** The initiative is part of the *Growing Hope Globally* network, aimed at helping people in developing nations learn to grow their own food. **Operations:** Local farmers and community members donate land, labor, and resources to grow crops, with proceeds donated to the global initiative. **Location:** The project is rooted in the Waukon area, with key activities taking place on local farms. **Impact:** The project has been active for over 17 years, significantly contributing to international hunger relief. **Support:** receives funding and recognition from organizations and donations. The Allamakee County Corner of Hope is a agricultural growing project in Northeast Iowa that works with Growing Hope Globally to support agricultural development and fight global hunger. It often collaborates with the Winneshiek County Community of Hope on local events.

To Receive the Word

Sunday morning worship services are on the local radio station. Dial in 103.5 FM (KNEI) at 8:30 am or log into www.kneiradio.com to worship with St. John's.

We also are video streaming on Facebook Live. <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnswaukon/>

Bulletins for the service can be found on our web pg www.stjohnswaukon.net

You may now receive the newsletter via email as a PDF document. Contact the church office if you would like to be on this email list.

St. John's is on the web at www.stjohnswaukon.net and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnswaukon/>



Trustee Meeting **SEE NARTHEX BULLETIN BOARD for details**

The Trustee's and Council met Monday, February 16 and the full minutes are posted.

Key updates: Osmund Quandahl Charitable Trust, Second Service Committee, 2027 National Youth Gathering, Security Video update.

New solar parking lot lights are up and running.

Call Committee Update

We are continuing to move forward with the next steps in the process with the Northeastern Iowa Synod.

St. John's Women Serving and Socializing

The 2026 WELCA booklets have been printed and are ready for you to pick up in the back of the church. There is a lot of good information in those booklets. If you are not able to pick up your booklet, please call and leave a message at the church office and we will make sure that you get your booklet.

We have new coffee pots! WELCA has purchased new stainless steel coffee pots for use in the church kitchen. We are hoping that the coffee tastes better. There are some special instructions on the wall near the coffee pots that tell about cleaning these new coffee pots. Thank you for your help in keeping them in good running order.

Again this year we are concentrating on pulling together baby kits. All of the information for these kits can be found in the 2026 WELCA booklet.

Respectfully, Karen Stamper

Sharing of the Peace

Dear friends in Christ,

As we gather for worship each week, one of the elements of worship that is listed in the ELW hymnal and considered a norm for our Lutheran faith, is called the sharing of the peace.

Many of you are familiar with this practice. If not, here are some brief thoughts on the topic.

Following the prayer of the day and just before the Great Thanksgiving, (holy communion) the worship leader will say; "Peace be with you." The proper response is; "And also with you."

We will then turn to our neighbors in the pews and say the same words; "Peace be with you." Please respond to those near you; "And also with you."

There are several ways to acknowledge this faith practice:

- 1) A simple nod as "peace be with you" is spoken
- 2) Holding your hands together as a sign of prayer and respect or
- 3) Some may wish to extend a hand and that is ok as well.

One may ask why we do this as a norm? The answer is simple: who does not desire to know the "peace of God that passes all understanding"?? (Phillipians 4:7) Jesus tells us in scripture many times to seek and know the peace of God. (John 14:7) And also in Matthew 5:9 Jesus tells us; "Blessed are the peacemakers." As the wonderful song tells us; "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me."

Thank you for your part in sharing the peace.

Grace and peace to you, Pastor Mark

Radio Ministry

Our March radio ministry broadcast is generously sponsored by Church Funds. We are thankful for the opportunity to share God's Word through this ministry.

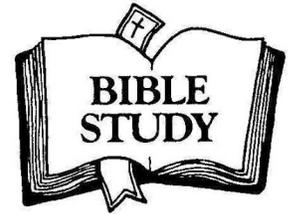
If you would like to sponsor a future broadcast in honor or memory of someone, or simply to support the ministry, we would love to hear from you. Please contact the church office at **563-568-3623** or email stjohnswaukon@gmail.com.

When you sponsor a broadcast, you are invited to choose a favorite hymn to be included in that service — a meaningful way to share a song that is special to you.



Bible Study

Want to grow in faith and fellowship? Join us for Sunday Bible Study! Will begin on March 1 and will meet through March 29. Come gather with us in the lounge at 9:30 a.m., between services. Everyone is welcome—we'd love to see you there!



First Communion Information

First Communion classes will be held on Sun, March 1, and Sun, March 15. Classes are for fourth graders and other children who are spiritually ready, as determined by parents in consultation with the Pastor. At least one parent must attend with the child. The First Communion Service will take place on Palm Sunday, March 29. Registration is required. Please contact the church office or Pastor Oehlert to register or with questions. Dawn Deines-Christiansen of *Prairie Patterns by Dawn D-C* will join us on March 15 during Sunday School to guide our First Communion students in creating their own chalices and patens. These handmade pieces will be glazed and fired in time to be used for their First Communion service.

We are currently confirming how many fourth-grade students will be participating in First Communion this year. There is a per-student cost to cover supplies, glazing, and firing. Please let the church office know as soon as possible if your child will be participating so we can plan accordingly.



St. John's Hymns

March 1 Second Sunday in Lent

No. 714 O God of Mercy, God of Light

First Lesson: Genesis 12:1-4a
Second Lesson: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17
Gospel: John 3:1-17

**No. 323 God Loved the World
During Distribution: 335, 336**

No. 811 On My Heart Imprint Your Image

March 22 Fifth Sunday in Lent

No. 712 Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service

First Lesson: Ezekiel 37:1-14
Second Lesson: Romans 8:6-11
Gospel: John 11:1-45

No. 773 Precious Lord, Take my Hand

No. 758 You Are The Way

March 29 Sunday of the Passion / Palm Sunday

No. 344 All Glory, Laud, and Honor

First Lesson: Isaiah 50:4-9a
Second Lesson: Philippians 2:5-11
Gospel: Matthew 26:14—27:66

**No. 335 Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross
During Distribution: 338, 353**

No. 346 Ride On, Ride On in Majesty

March 8 Third Sunday in Lent

No. 533 Open Now the Gates of Bounty

First Lesson: Exodus 17:1-7
Second Lesson: Romans 5:1-11
Gospel: John 4:5-42

No. 658 O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts

No. 618 Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer

March 15 Fourth Sunday in Lent

No. 722 O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate

First Lesson: 1 Samuel 16:1-13
Second Lesson: Ephesians 5:8-14
Gospel: John 9:1-41

No. 779 Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

During Distribution: 782, 783

No. 324 In the Cross of Christ I Glory

Music Ministry

Lent is well under way with some adjustments to our choir rehearsal schedule for those wishing to attend the Bible Study between services on Sunday mornings.

Sunday schedule is as follows: No Senior Choir rehearsal between services. Sunday evenings Senior Bell Choir 6:00 pm; Men's Choir 7:00 pm.

Wednesday Evenings: 5:30 pm Lenten supper begins, 6:00 pm Youth Bell Choir Rehearsal, 7:00 pm Mid-Week Lenten Service, 7:45 pm Senior Choir rehearsal.

Hopefully this rehearsal time will accommodate everyone's schedule until Holy Week. Thank you all for sharing your time and talents by enhancing our worship services with music as J.S. Bach noted on his composition "*Soli Deo Gloria*", to the glory of God alone!

Jim Bieber



Tentative Pastor Schedule

Mar. 1 Pastor Mark Oehlert
 Mar. 8 Pastor Ron Barth
 Mar. 15 Pastor Mark Oehlert
 Mar. 22 Pastor Charis Combs-Lay
 Mar. 29 Pastor Mark Oehlert
 Wed. Holden Evening Prayer Services—
 Pastor Mark Oehlert

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Worship 8:30&10:30am w/ comm *Noisy Offering 9:30 Sunday School & Sr Choir First Communion; Bible Study 6pm Sr Bell Choir (during Lent) 7pm Men's Choir	2	3	4 8:45am-Noon Quilting 5:30-6:30pm LYO Supper 6pm Youth Bell Choir 7pm Holden Evening Prayer Service Confirmation briefly AFTER services 7:45pm Sr Choir	5	6	7
8 Worship 8:30&10:30am 9:30 Sunday School; Sr Choir; Bible Study 6pm Sr Bell Choir (during Lent) 7pm Men's Choir	9	10 7pm Dorcas Circle Meet Virtually	11 8:45am-Noon Quilting 5:30-6:30pm LYO Supper 6pm Youth Bell Choir 7pm Holden Evening Prayer Service Confirmation briefly AFTER services 7:45pm Sr Choir	12 WIC Here	13	14
15 Worship 8:30&10:30am w/comm 9:30 Sunday School & Sr Choir First Communion; Bible Study 6pm Sr Bell Choir (during Lent) 7pm Men's Choir	16 <u>APRIL Newsletter articles DUE</u>	17	18 8:45am-Noon Quilting 5:30-6:30pm LYO Supper 6pm Youth Bell Choir 7pm Holden Evening Prayer Service Confirmation briefly AFTER services 7:45pm Sr Choir	19	20	21
22 Worship 8:30&10:30am 9:30 Sunday School & Sr Choir First Communion; Bible Study 6pm Sr Bell Choir (during Lent) 7pm Men's Choir	23	24 Nursing Home Visits 1pm Northgate 2pm Good Sam 2:45pm Ever- green	25 8:45am-Noon Quilting 5:30-6:30pm LYO Supper 6pm Youth Bell Choir 7pm Holden Evening Prayer Service Confirmation briefly AFTER services 7:45pm Sr Choir	26	27	28
29 Worship 8:30&10:30am w/comm 9:30 Sunday School & Sr Choir First Communion; Bible Study 6pm Sr Bell Choir (during Lent) 7pm Men's Choir	30	31	1 APRIL 8:45am-Noon Quilting 4:30-7pm Meatball Sup- per	2 Maundy Thursday Services TBA	3 Good Friday Ecumenical Services TBA	4

The names listed are those currently recorded as active members in the church CDM+ directory. If your name was inadvertently missed or any of your information is incorrect, please contact the church office at 563-568-3623 or stjohnswaukon@gmail.com



- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 2—Melissa Clarke | 12—John Bauercamper | 26—Michael Hagensick |
| 3—Lee Moser | 12—Donna Wood | 26—Jeremy Hills |
| 3—Jameson Weymiller | 14—Allen Goeke | 26—Jon Thorstenson |
| 5—Elly Christen | 17—Erika Fish | 26—Rick Yohe |
| 5—Madelyn Moser | 18—Sandy Fink | 26—Jace Gossman |
| 5—Rebecca Roe | 18—Carissa Hesse/Howe | 27—Darold Berger |
| 5—Julie Schulte | 19—Daren Dietrich | 27—Rachel Moser |
| 6—Susan Kratz | 20—Henley Benson | 28—Wyatt Baxter |
| 6—Olivia Marti | 20—Cheryl Fetketter | 28—Jeff Johnson |
| 6—Wendy Sanderson | 22—Kreed Leiran | 28—Victor Stuckman |
| 6—Susan Torkelson | 22—Maudie Syhlman | 28—Matt Teslow |
| 8—Lois Rolfs | 25—Glenn Grimstad | 31—Ruth Hagensick |
| 9—Mary Ann Andregg | 25—Greyson Sanderson | 31—Stella Hagensick |
| 9—Ella Mae Goeke | | |

March Anniversaries

- Dennis & Sherri Lyons
 Darrell & Jean Stone
 Will & Mary Ament
 Ernest & LaVonne Palas
 Reed & Joyce Bosley

February 2026

- Baptisms: None
 Weddings: None
 Deaths: None

St. John's Volunteer Duty List

Mar ch	Service	Greeters	Readers	Comm. Asst.	Comm. Prep.	Aco-lytes	Ushers
1	8:30AM	Bailey Benson Family	Bailey Benson	Randy & Lori Hesse; Bonnie Roe Linda Groe	Sherry Knudtson; Kasey Iver-son Linda Groe	Lena Rausch	Lee & Chris Ellickson Family
	10:30AM	Darlene Schlake	Jill Kistler				
8	8:30AM	Ron & Linda Dahlstrom	Linda Groe				Same
	10:30AM	Vickie Larson	Karen Stamper				
15	8:30AM	Jeff & Diana Johnson	Diana Johnson	Chris Stuckman; Ron Dahlstrom; Sarah Sweeney	Sue Blagsvedt; Bonnie Roe		Same
	10:30AM		Lori Hesse	Jill Kistler	Jill Kistler; Evonne Kistler		
22	8:30AM	Bill & Linda Halvorson	Linda Halvor-son				
	10:30AM	Mary Jackson	Mary Jackson				
29	8:30AM	Geralyn Smith	Mary Jo Meyer	Russ & Mary Jo Meyer; Vickie Larson	Altar Guild	Mya Jones	Same
	10:30AM		Linda Groe	Lori Hesse	Altar Guild		
Palm Sunday							

Camp EWALU

Summer registration NOW OPEN! It's that time of year... to start thinking about SUMMER! Registration for Ewalu's summer programs are now open! We have 8 weeks of youth summer camp from June to August, plus 2 sessions of Family Camp and 2 sessions of Grandparent Camp. Get out your calendar and start making your summer plans now! Remember, our best discount (\$40 off) is available if you register by February 28! Plus, tiered pricing lets you select the best price for your family. Schedule grid and pricing details at <https://ewalu.org/>



Living in The Fullness of God

Living in the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19) means experiencing the totality of His love, power, and presence by anchoring your life in Christ, obeying the Holy Spirit, and daily surrendering your will. This involves maturing spiritually, prioritizing God's Word, and letting His love drive out fear, resulting in a life filled with purpose, peace, and spiritual authority.

Key Ways to Live in the Fullness of God:

- **Prioritize Spiritual Intimacy:** Actively pursue a deeper, daily relationship with God through prayer, meditation, and studying Scripture to understand His will and love.
- **Abide in Christ and Obey:** Live in obedience to the teachings of Jesus and submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in every area of life.
- **Renew Your Mind:** Shift your perspective to align with God's, letting go of old ways of thinking to adopt a new, righteous, and holy mindset.
- **Surrender and Empty Yourself:** Daily, relinquish your old, selfish nature and sins to make room for more of God's presence, as noted in this article from More of Him Ministries.
- **Experience God's Love:** Actively seek to understand and walk in the vast, surpassing love of Christ, which brings confidence and security.
- **Live by Faith in Trials:** Rely on God's strength and promises during difficulties rather than fearing or trying to manage crises on your own, suggests this Lifeway article.

Practices to Cultivate Fullness:

- **Daily Prayer:** Pray through scriptures like Ephesians 3:14-19, which focuses on being filled with God's power and love.
- **Worship and Gratitude:** Shift from mundane life to a lifestyle of worship, praise, and thanksgiving.
- **Service and Mission:** Engage in selfless service and love for others as an extension of God's love.
- **Redeem the Time:** Actively seek opportunities to do good and fulfill your God-given purpose.

Helpful Tips to bring God into our daily lives...

School/Work

- Pray daily (morning, before class/work, or lunch)

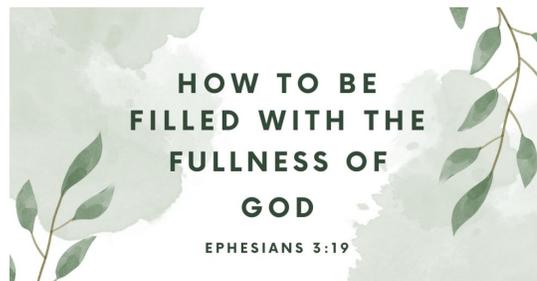
Home

- Go to Church together
- Read a Bible verse or Bible story
- Keep a family prayer routine

Reflection Questions:

- How did I stay close to God today?
- Did I remember to pray or trust God?
- How can I grow stronger in my faith tomorrow?

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." — Galatians 5:22–23



Digital Fast this Lenten Season

During Lent, we are invited to reflect on the life of Jesus, his love for others, and his commitment to serve. Lent (Feb. 18 – April 4, 2026) is a 40-day, sacred, and reflective season for Christians to deepen their relationship with God through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It serves as a time to focus on Jesus' journey, sacrifice, and compassion, inviting believers to foster spiritual growth, and extend love to others through service. This Lenten season, cultivate spiritual growth by taking a "digital fast," replacing screen time with prayer, intentional connection, and presence. Choose from, or mix and match, 10 distinct challenges designed to reduce phone dependency, such as turning your screen to grayscale, establishing phone-free zones, or reading physical books instead of scrolling social media.

Here are 10 concrete, actionable, and sacrificial screen-time challenges for Lent 2026:

1. **Go Grayscale:** Set your phone screen to monochrome, making it significantly less addictive and appealing.
2. **No Phone in the Bedroom:** Buy a physical alarm clock and keep your phone in another room overnight.
3. **No Tech Sunday:** Completely abstain from social media and streaming on Sundays.
4. **The "Phone-Free Table" Rule:** Designate all meal times as phone-free, focusing on conversation with family or enjoying silence.
5. **Delete Social Media Apps:** Remove apps like TikTok, Instagram, or Facebook from your phone, using only desktop versions if necessary.
6. **Commute in Silence:** Drive or ride without podcasts, music, or audiobooks to allow for prayer and quiet reflection.
7. **Strict "One-Screen" Policy:** Only watch one episode of a show at a time instead of binge-watching.
8. **Physical Media Only:** Read books, newspapers, or magazines in print rather than on a tablet or phone screen.
9. **Delay Morning Usage:** Do not check your phone for the first hour after waking up, filling that time with prayer or meditation.
10. **"Analog" Hobbies:** Replace evening scrolling with hobbies like drawing, puzzles, gardening, or writing.

What to do instead of picking up your phone:

- **Pray a Rosary or Chaplet:** Use the time to pray instead of checking email.
- **Read Scripture:** Keep a bible or devotional book readily available.
- **Journal:** Write down thoughts or prayers.
- **Go for a Walk:** Walk without headphones or your phone.
- **Engage in Conversation:** Talk with family members or friends in person.
- **Practice Silence:** Embrace quiet moments to hear God.

Real change rarely comes from dramatic, one-time decisions — it comes from small, repeatable actions.

When you *take it in stride*, you remove the pressure of perfection. When you *start small*, you make it sustainable. And when something becomes part of your daily rhythm, it stops feeling like effort and starts feeling like identity.

Consistency turns intention into habit. Habit turns action into character.

Lent Challenge



To make a Lenten practice stick, it is recommended to choose something that challenges you but is not overwhelming, allowing for steady, sustainable growth. Starting a Lenten challenge—whether fasting or adding a new practice—is an effective way to build lasting habits.

As the 40-day, 40-night period provides enough time to break old routines and form new ones. The focus is often on transforming spiritual, physical, or behavioral habits into permanent positive changes. The 40-day commitment is often enough time to make a new action feel routine. While the immediate challenge lasts 40 days, the goal is often to adopt these behaviors as lifelong improvements.

Share your Lenten challenge on the "Fasting Board" in the Narthex — and see what others are doing that may spark you to try something new!