

St. John's Lutheran Church Newsletter

**Interim Pastor
Mark Oehlert**



2026



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Dear friends in Christ,

It is with great joy that I share with you that St. John's is revitalizing our prayer chain. We will have two avenues for prayers requested from our people.

1. For prayer requests that one desires to be held private, call Bill Roe. Bill will share with the active prayer "angels" who have promised to hold confidentiality with prayer requests.
2. For prayer requests that one would like congregational support for, call the office (563.568.3623) and leave your name and if you choose, a brief explanation of what the request is for: health, relationships, loved ones etc. These are requests that will go into our congregation's prayer open list.

Needed: prayer "angels" that promise to pray confidentially as requested. I will emphasize confidential. Prayer requests that come through Bill require private prayer. There are those who indeed desire prayers but prefer a bit more low key approach to spiritual care. Please contact **Bill Roe** (563.568.1600) if you are interested. We welcome prayer "angels" from any age group.

A second joy I would like to share with you is the newly formed bible study group that meets on Sunday mornings between worship services. We have had a marvelous response to the invitation to attend. The group meets in the lounge each week. Initially, the plan was to meet during March to assess the interest level. There has been a remarkable response and the group is quite healthy in terms of size and content! As such, the group will continue meeting weekly indefinitely into the future. Thank you Cindy Wuebker for getting this going!

Other possibilities are many in terms of more bible groups:

1. Walk and pray- a two-fold benefit would come with this idea- both physical and spiritual wellness.
2. How about a monthly men's bible breakfast and conversation?
3. Some of our folks participate in an on line group- perhaps St. John's could begin one of that type for those with mobility concerns.
4. Moms together- being a mother in today's world is challenging. Often times careers, family and other commitments make for a frazzled lifestyle. Engaging God's word can bring a spiritually grounded lifestyle that benefits not only Mom- but the whole family.
5. Teens and God. Lord only knows it is difficult being a teenager today. There are many pressures in daily life. Engaging God's eternal word can bring a sense of purpose and self as rightfully claiming identity as one of God's beloved and truly helps transcend worldly problems.
6. The possibilities are endless. Healthy congregations engage God's word often and find stimulation, energy and inspiration for daily living in these challenging times.

The scriptures studied are the upcoming readings for Sunday worship each week. Conversation and study of these scriptures add greatly to one's worship experience when one attends church the following Sunday. Study of God's word is fuel for daily living. Contact me with your ideas and which group you would like to be a part of.

You will be glad you did!

Grace and peace, Interim Pastor Mark Oehlert

Office Hours: Mondays following the first and third Sundays (after Lent), from **9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.**, with adjustments as needed. Wed during lent after 10:00 a.m. 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 will begin meeting again in April. Happy Spring! Join us on Tuesday, April 14 at 9:15 AM. Dorcas Circle will meet virtually at 7 pm on Tuesday, April 14 .



LYO Youth Ministry Team

LYO would like to thank the choir, council, and WELCA for helping and providing casseroles for our weekly Lenten suppers. Special thank you to Linda Groe for making the jello every week, and Matt Teslow for getting the rolls and milk every week. Thank you to the parents and youth for helping and providing casseroles. Thank you to everyone who attended our casserole suppers.

LYO will be having Easter breakfast following Sunrise service April 5. We will be serving egg bakes, cinnamon rolls, and beverages.

Youth News!

The 4th graders have been working with the Pastor in preparation for their First Communion. March weather may have caused a delay in their plans to create chalices and patens; however, a make-up date has been scheduled for March 29.

Their First Communion will be celebrated during the April 19 8:30 am service.

Camperships—If you are planning on attending summer camp, please let the church office know as soon as possible as there are funds available to help offset the cost for families!



Quilting

Love quilting or want to learn?

Join us on Wednesdays 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. They are looking for electric can openers to use on April 1. If you have one that can be used that day, please contact Matt Teslow or Donna Wood. Helper sign-up sheets and flyers are available in the Narthex. Thank you for helping make this supper a success for our church! Proceeds in the past have helped with the building fund and other church projects.

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/>

Please inform the church office of any interruptions to the radio broadcast or Facebook Live stream. We have been making adjustments and updating our sound equipment to better share the Word. Thank you for your patience and assistance.

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

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

Key updates: Working since December for the IRS Energy Credit. Security Video getting updated. Replacement of microphone transmitter, lapel for broadcasting. Second service committee meetings. Pastor Oehlert contract renewal to end of 2026.

Call Committee Update

We met in early March with Steve Brackett, Assistant to the Bishop at Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA. We are continuing to move forward with the process.

St. John's Women Serving and Socializing

Thank you so much to all who have donated to the baby kits this year. Your response has been great! There has been some confusion with the baby kits so I would like to clear up

some of the questions. The two long or short sleeved sleepers can be with or without feet. We have someone who is able to cut off the feet and finish the hems. Each kit also needs two blankets. One blanket should be a receiving blan-



ket and the other should be a larger one (36 x 52 inches). The bigger blanket is used to wrap the entire kit before it is shipped off. If you have any questions, please reach out to Nona Sawyer or Cindy Wuebker.

Our Meatball Supper is coming up quickly on April 1. The callers have been busy making calls to our women for donations of pies, salads, butter, and money. There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer to help out and make the church supper a success. We will need some people to peel potatoes on the morning of April 1. Also, we will need people to help serve the food, take in the money, and clean up. Please check the signup sheets in the back of the church.

We'd like to thank the people who volunteered to donate casseroles for the March 25 Lenten Service Casserole Supper. Thank you to the people who volunteered to help out that night as well.

Summer is getting closer and closer. It is time to sign up to go to Bible Camp. Please sign up by calling the church office. WELCA is planning on sponsoring kids from our church again this year in this valuable learning opportunity.

The ladies have started up quilting again! They meet from about 8:30/9:00 until noon. Come and join in the fun! If you have any questions, please reach out to Joan Moody or Mary Lou Sorum.

There are many opportunities to get involved in the workings of our church.

Please join in as you are able! *Respectfully, Karen Stamper*

Sharing of the Peace

In our worship, as guided by the Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW), we share Christ's peace before Holy Communion. The leader says, "The peace of Christ be with you," and we respond, "And also with you," then share these words with those near us.

This simple exchange — through a nod, folded hands, or a handshake — reflects God's promise: "The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

Grace and peace to you, Pastor Mark



Radio Ministry

Our April 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.

Solar Panels

The certificate of completion with Alliant Energy for the solar panels was finalized in November. The system has been operational since December and is already helping offset energy costs for our church. It is projected that the system will achieve cost recovery in approximately 8.25 years.

The total cost for completion of the solar project by Perry Novak Electric was \$54,800, with the final payment made upon completion. The church received \$43,988 in designated funds to support the installation of the panels.

We continue to work through the IRS Energy Credit process with assistance from Hacker Nelson, who has been very helpful throughout. This process began online in December when the panels became active. It involves completing forms, uploading supporting documentation, and submitting materials for IRS review. Progress has been slow, with limited response times. On March 18, we participated in a webinar to gain additional guidance before resubmitting our application.

Plans for installation of a fence/barrier around the solar equipment are still in progress and will be completed once weather conditions improve.

We have been seeing cost savings for our church and look forward to even greater savings in the summer months ahead.

St. John's Hymns

April 5 Easter Sunday

No. 365 Christ The Lord Is Risen Tiday

First Lesson: Acts 10:34-43

Second Lesson: Colossians 3:1-4

Gospel: Mathew 28:1-10

No. 384 That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright

During Distribution: 432, 449

No. 385 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing!

April 12 Second Sunday of Easter

No. 367 Now all The Vault of Heaven Resounds

First Lesson: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Second Lesson: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Gospel: John 20:19-31

No. 635 We Walk by Faith

No. 380 Hallelujah! Jesus Lives!

April 19 Third Sunday of Easter

No. 377 Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!

First Lesson: Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Second Lesson: 1 Peter 1:17-23

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

No. 374 Day of Arising

During Distribution: 491, 494

No. 548 Rise, O Church, like Christ Arisen

April 26 Fourth Sunday of Easter

No. 807 Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

First Lesson: Acts 2:42-47

Second Lesson: 1 Peter 2:19-25

Gospel: John 10:1-10

No. 778 The Lord's My Shepherd

No. 544 Praise the Lord, Rise up Rejoicing



Music Ministry

Thank you Senior Choir for singing at all our Wednesday Lenten service and Maundy Thursday. The senior choir will be singing for the Good Friday Ecumenical Services.

Rehearsal schedule for Holy week and Easter are as follows:
Sunday, March 29 Palm Sunday 6:00 pm Senior Bells 7:00 pm Men's Choir

Wednesday, April 1 No rehearsals or services due to Meatball Supper.

Maundy Thursday, April 2 6:15 pm Senior Bells, 6:30 pm Senior Choir, 7:00 pm Services.

Good Friday, April 3 1:00 pm Senior Choir and Men's Choir perform at Ecumenical Service.

Easter, Sunday April 5 Youth Bells and Senior Choir preform

No rehearsals Easter Sunday Evening

Regular rehearsal schedule will resume on Wednesday, April 8.

Thank you choirs for adjusting to the alternate schedule during Lent.

Jim Bieber



Dates & Events

April at a Glance

Wed, April 1

8:45am-noon Quilting Fellowship Hall
4:30pm-7pm Meatball Supper Fellowship Hall

Thurs, April 2—Pastor Mark Oehlert

7pm Maundy Thursday Services W/Comm

Fri, April 3

1pm Area Ecumenical Service Area Clergy

Sun, April 5—Pastor Mark Oehlert

6:30am Sunrise Service W/Comm *Noisy Offering

8:30am Service W/Comm *Noisy Offering

9:30am Sunday School, Sr Choir

10:30am Service W/Comm *Noisy Offering

Wed, April 8

8:45am-noon Quilting Fellowship Hall

6pm Youth Bells

7pm Sr Bells, Confirmation

Thurs, April 9

WIC here

Sun, April 12—Pastor Ron Barth

8:30am Service W/Comm

9:30am Sunday School, Sr Choir

10:30am Service W/Comm

7pm Men's Choir

Tues, April 14

9:15am Sarah Circle Lounge

7pm Dorcas Circle Meet Virtually

Wed, April 15

Newsletter article deadline: All submissions are due to the office

8:45am-noon Quilting Fellowship Hall

6pm Youth Bells

7pm Sr Bells, Confirmation

Sun, April 19—Pastor Mark Oehlert

8:30am Service W/Comm, 4th grade Communion, *Pennies for Presents

9:30am Sunday School, Sr Choir

10:30am Service W/Comm *Pennies for Presents

7pm Men's Choir

*Pastors subject to change with scheduling

Mon, April 20

6pm Board of Trustee Mtg

Wed, April 22

8:45am-noon Quilting Fellowship Hall

6pm Youth Bells

7pm Sr Bells

7pm Confirmation at Waukon Wellness Center

(possible last class Melissa will let the class know)

Sun, April 26—Pastor Waldemar Gies

8:30am Service

9:30am Sunday School, Sr Choir

10:30am Service

7pm Men's Choir

Tues, April 28

Nursing Home Visits

1pm Northgate Care Center

2pm Good Samaritan Society

2:45pm Evergreen Court

Wed, April 29

8:45am-noon Quilting Fellowship Hall

6pm Youth Bells

7pm Sr Bells

7pm Confirmation *(possible class make up day Melissa will let the class know)*

Sundays in MAY

Sun, May 3

8:30am Service W/Comm *Noisy Offering

9:30am Sunday School, Sr Choir

10:30am Service W/Comm *Noisy Offering

Sun, May 10

8:30am Service- Choir Recognition

9:30am Sunday School, Sr Choir

10:30am Service

Sun, May 17

8:30am Service W/Comm—Graduating Senior Recognition

9:30am Sunday School, Sr Choir

10:30am Service W/Comm

Sun, May 24—Services will change to 8:30am and 10:00 am



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

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1—Annelise Hanson | 12—Hailey Cook | 23—Hattie Rottink |
| 2—Kasey Iverson | 14—Jane Dietrich | 24—Shawn Gordon |
| 3—Brooke Tweten | 15—Rose Beardmore | 24—Kaylie Hanson |
| 4—Brooks Dougherty | 15—David Svendsen | 25—Hudson Hills |
| 4—Caroll Schreiber | 15—Eva Urmanski | 25—Cole Iverson |
| 4—Kevin Stinn | 16—Christopher Stuckman | 25—Trent Peterson |
| 5—Jenna Fish | 17—Briggs Allison | 26—Annette Cook |
| 5—Dustin Otto | 18—Lynsey Houg | 26—Bonnie Roe |
| 5—Kay Sewick | 18—Tammy Knudtson | 27—Irene Clarke |
| 5—Sarah Stock | 18—Mark Stone | 27—Jon Payne |
| 6—Gordon Ellingson | 19—Darlene Schlake | 27—Virgil Thorstenson |
| 6—Mary Flatin | 20—Susan Burrow | 29—Bailey Benson |
| 8—Keigan Leiran | 21—Jerry Schnuelle | 29—Henry Clarke |
| 9—Marlene Hills | 22—Don Dahlstrom | 29—Nichole Krueger |
| 9—Willard Jr. Roe | 22—Blake Roe | 30—Michael Allison |
| 10—Matthew Joachim | 23—Susan Blagsvedt | 30—Kacey Nuehring |
| 10—Cora Marti | 23—Owen Martin | 30—Lorraine Severson |

Happy Anniversary

April Anniversaries

- Matt & Kirby Jones
- Wayne & Nona Sawyer
- Kevin & Kayla Leiran
- Thomas & Caroll Schreiber
- Adam & Rosemary Hagensick
- Shawn & Jodie Moe
- Jared & Jill Soper

March 2026

- Baptisms: None
- Weddings: None
- Deaths: Alan West, Irvin Fosaaen

St. John's Volunteer Duty List

April	Service	Greeters	Readers	Comm. Asst.	Comm. Prep.	Acolytes	Ushers
2	7:00 PM Maundy Thursday		Vickie Larson	Chris Stuckman	Linda Groe		Steve & Sheryl Evanson
3	1:00 PM	Area Ecumenical Service					
5 Easter	6:30AM		Linda DeBuhr	DeBuhr Family	Linda Groe		Bill & Becky Roe Family
	8:30AM	David & Wendy Sanderson	Joan Moody	Bill & Sue Blagsvedt, Sherry Knudtston	Altar Guild	Lena Rausch	Matt & Dawn Teslow, Fred Oelberg
	10:30AM		Melissa Clarke	Melissa Clarke	Altar Guild		Norman Peterson
12	8:30AM	Russ & Mary Jo Meyer	Nona Sawyer			Mason Jones	Same
	10:30AM		Chris Engstrom				
19	8:30AM	Joan Moody	Matt Teslow	Russ & Mary Jo Meyer; Joan Moody	Cindy Barnes, Jane Kallevang	Maya Jones	Same
	10:30AM		Wendy Bucheit	Karen Stamper	Lori Hesse		
26	8:30AM	Mary Jackson	Vickie Larson			Mason Jones	Same
	10:30AM		Linda Groe				

Thrivent Choice Dollars

Congratulations! In 2025, St. John's Lutheran Church received money through the Thrivent Choice® program — and that's worth celebrating! Your work strengthens communities, and we're grateful for the impact you make every day. With the March 31, 2026 deadline approaching, now is a great time to remind our supporters to direct any remaining 2025 Choice Dollars® before they expire. We're grateful to partner with Thrivent Choice and look forward to your continued impact.

<https://www.thrivent.com/about-us/membership/thrivent-choice>

Daily Faith Practices

Setting the mind on the Spirit means aligning thoughts, desires, and actions with the Holy Spirit rather than sinful human nature, resulting in life and peace (Romans 8:6). It requires active trust in God, prayerful dependency, and, during Lent, a intentional refocusing of priorities on Christ, especially as we recognize the failure of our own efforts.



Ways to Avoid Setting Our Mind on the Flesh

- **Acknowledge and Rely:** Stop trying to overcome sin or please God through sheer self-will. Instead, acknowledge your weakness and "cast yourself upon God," trusting in His power rather than your own.
- **Shift from Self-Absorption:** Avoid being obsessed with measuring your own "moral muscle" or focusing solely on personal gratification and earthly anxieties.
- **Repentance (Metanoia):** Actively change your mindset from self-centeredness to God-centeredness, reversing the direction of your thoughts and actions.

What it Means to Set Your Mind on the Spirit

Controlled by the Spirit: It means letting the Holy Spirit govern your thoughts, will, and purpose.

- **Dependence:** Trusting in God's action within you and relying on His strength for spiritual life.
- **Focus on God:** Allowing your mind to dwell on heavenly things, submitting to God's law, and focusing on Christ rather than selfish desires.

How To Set Your Mind on the Spirit

- **Time for Refocusing:** Turn away from earthly distractions (the flesh) and refocus priorities on Christ.
- **Admitting Limitations:** Lent provides a structured time to admit when our own best intentions have failed, causing us to lean on the Spirit instead of our own willpower.
- **A Season of Turning:** It serves as an invitation to "crucify" the fleshly, self-centered desires and embrace the life-giving guidance of the Spirit.

Live among God's faithful people

High-level athletes spend significant energy keeping their bodies in top condition, but also spend time preparing their minds. They know how important it is to set their minds on positive images. If athletes set their minds on failure and loss, they often face defeat. But as they hone their skills and focus on best practices, often their performances rise to the occasion.

Paul encourages us to set our minds on the Spirit. For we have already been given the gift of the Spirit in our baptism. "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him." (Romans 8:9b NRSV) We do not set our minds on the Spirit in order to get something, but to be an even more open and recipient of God's grace. We set our minds on the Spirit, live in Christ, and encourage others to do likewise.

What do you plan to do this week to set your mind on the Spirit of Christ?

Prayer "Mighty God, set our minds on Christ and free us from power of death. Focus our eyes on the cross and the gift of the risen Christ. Amen"

Set **your** focus on being in the Spirit.

The Chipped Cup

This Lenten season you may have heard Pastor Mark talking about the chipped cup. The 'chipped cup' is a symbolic image used to represent **human imperfection, vulnerability, and the beauty found in brokenness**. It serves as a reminder that God uses people who are "chipped" or flawed to carry out His work.



Reflection: The Value of the Chip

- **Purpose over Perfection:** A cup with a chip can still hold water and provide a drink to someone who is thirsty. Your value is not in being flawless, but in your willingness to be used.
- **Windows for Light:** Just as cracks in a lantern allow the light inside to shine out, our "chips" are the places where God's grace and strength become visible to others.
- **The Content Matters:** A cup's primary purpose is to be emptied and shared. Lent invites us to stop hiding our "scars" and instead offer the "treasure" within us—the love and message of Christ—to a hurting world.

Connection to "The Cup of Our Lives"

- The **scars and wounds** we carry from life's struggles.
- An invitation to **embrace our history** rather than hiding our flaws.
- A parallel to the **Japanese art of Kintsugi**, where broken pottery is repaired with gold, making it more valuable because of its history of being broken.

Daily Action: The "Cup" Exercise

During your prayer time, hold an actual coffee cup. Run your fingers along the rim and handle. If you find a chip or scratch, let it remind you of a specific struggle or flaw. Instead of feeling shame, thank God for the way He continues to fill and use you despite that "chip".

Embracing Personal Imperfection

- **Identify Your "Chips":** What are the personal flaws, past mistakes, or current limitations that you usually try to hide? Write them down and consider how they have shaped the person you are today.
- **Redefining Success:** How does your definition of "perfection" differ from God's view of "purpose"? If a chipped cup can still quench a person's thirst, what can your "imperfect" life still offer to others?
- **Befriending the Flaws:** Instead of trying to "fix" your broken pieces through sheer will, imagine showing one specific "chip" to Jesus. What would it feel like to hear Him say, "Give me that misery; it is the property of My Heart"?

The "Jar of Clay" (2 Corinthians 4:7)

- **The Hidden Treasure:** Paul says we have "treasure in jars of clay". What is the specific "treasure" (grace, joy, peace, or a specific gift) that God has placed inside your fragile vessel?
- **Light Through the Cracks:** Recall a time when a difficult season or a personal weakness actually allowed you to experience God's power more clearly. How did that "crack" let His light shine through?
- **Surpassing Power:** In what areas of your life are you currently "pressed but not crushed"? How can acknowledging your limitations help you rely more on God's "all-surpassing power" rather than your own strength?

Video Security System

We are in the process of updating our video security system, as our current system is outdated and not functioning properly. The estimated cost of this upgrade is approximately \$11,000.

If you would like to contribute to this important safety improvement, please direct your donation to the church office. Checks may be made payable to St. John's, with "Security System" noted in the memo line.

We greatly appreciate your support in helping keep our church a safe and welcoming place for all.

