

# The Loveletter

St. John Lutheran Church, 201 Fourth Avenue, Keystone, Iowa 52249

February, 2026

## Midweek Lenten Services

Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, is on February 18th. This year, Pastor Schultz will be part of a round-robin group which will include himself, Pastor Preus, Pastor Lingard, and Pastor Johnson. Each pastor will rotate to a different church each week. The theme for this year's Lenten Midweek Series is "For Us". We will journey through history and hymn text for "O Love, How Deep" to see the depth, breadth, and height of God's love FOR US, His creation. "For us" encompasses how God is beyond our comprehension yet took on the most accessible form to walk with us. Meditate on this historical hymn throughout the season of Lent to see how God's love is steady, deep, and endless. Our Ash Wednesday service on February 18th begins at 6:30 p.m. and will include the imposition of ashes and the Lord's Supper.

Like last year we will be holding a simple meal as we observe the penitential season of Lent. Serving will be from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m. We are asking for volunteers to bring in food for these meals. It can be soups or simple entrées like sloppy joes, hot dogs, etc. Something that can be kept warm for our 45 minute meal time. We also would like breads and desserts/bars like last year. Bowls, plates, cups, disposable silverware, crackers, butter, etc. will be provided. There are sign-up sheets in the narthex, please sign up in advance where you can. Please have your food to the church basement by 5:15. This is a self-serve meal so you can come anytime between 5:30 and 6:15 to eat. Those who choose to eat will need to clean up their table as they leave and dispose of their table service in the trash. This should allow time to get upstairs for worship. There will be a hymn sing starting at 6:15, with worship starting at 6:30 p.m.

We will have "For Us" daily devotions available for you to pick up as well. Spend every day reflecting on why God sent His Son to die for you with this devotional. Contemplate Scripture as you read a short, one-page devotion each day. This devotional starts with Ash Wednesday and leads us all the way through Easter Sunday.

As we enter the Season of Lent, please join us and invite others to attend with you!

## 2026 Church Council to be Installed

The 2026 Church Council was installed on Sunday, January 4th, during our worship service. At the church council meeting held on January 11th, the specific offices and positions of responsibility for each council member were determined. Richard Oehlerich remains President; Kent Silhanek, Vice-president; Doug Buch remains Secretary; and Jordan Silhanek remains Treasurer. Other positions, Membercare, Assimilation, Fellowship and Evangelism - Barbara Hennings; Stewardship of Life, Bible Studies, Training and Assimilation - Mary Sievers; Worship and Prayer - Ann Franzburg; Children's Spiritual Growth - Mary Sievers; Staff and Facilities - Byran Kimm and Doug Buch; Teen Connection and Spiritual Growth - Adrieonna Reddick; Missions - Brad Sievers. Please keep our council members in your prayers as they begin their duties for the new year.

## Contribution Statements

If you haven't already done so, please pick up your 2025 Contribution Statement. They are located in the southeast corner of the sanctuary. If you would like to have your statement sent to you via mail or e-mail, please contact the church office. There are also a few boxes of offering envelopes there that have not yet been picked up.

## Enrollment at Central Lutheran

Starting on February 9th, Central Lutheran is accepting enrollment applications from supporting and contributing congregations (St. John -Newhall, St. Stephens - Atkins, and St. John-Keystone). Forms are available on Central's website. More information is included in the CLS monthly newsletter located on page 5 of this publication.

### THE LOVELETTER

*Published Monthly by*

**St. John Lutheran Church**  
(Missouri Synod)  
201 Fourth Avenue  
P.O. Box 176  
Keystone, Iowa 52249  
Phone: 319-442-3514

**Church E-Mail:**  
stjnluth@netins.net

**Church Website:**  
www.stjohnkeystone.org

### OUR STAFF

Rev. Josiah Schultz  
Pastor  
Phone: 913-223-8261

Donna Busch  
Parish Assistant  
319-721-0952

Relda Pickering  
Custodian  
319-442-3742

### WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday Worship  
9:00 a.m.

### BIBLE STUDIES

Sunday School  
10:15 - 11:15 a.m.

Sunday Adult Bible Class  
10:15 - 11:15 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Class  
9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

### SWADDLING CLOTHES

Store open second  
Saturday of each month  
from 9 to noon,  
the following Monday  
afternoon from 4:30 - 5:30

### Quarterly Voters' Meeting

A Quarterly Voters' Meeting was held on Sunday, January 18th, following the worship service. The budget for 2026 was presented and approved. (If you weren't able to attend and would like a copy of the budget, please contact the church office.) A vote was held as to where the donations in our 2026 "mission" envelopes should go. Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca was chosen as our local mission, and supporting the Rev. Jason Groth, missionary to Belize, was chosen as our international mission. Each will receive 1/2 of our mission offerings this year. Please note that if you would like your mission offerings to go to other places, you may note that on your missions envelope. The third item on the agenda was the congregation's vote on synodical positions at the national convention this summer. Mr. Parris, principal at Central Lutheran, gave a report on things happening at CLS. A report was also given about the letters sent and responses received from the mailing sent to those members we haven't seen in a while.

### St. John Choir

The choir took a short break after the Christmas season and will be back soon practicing music for Lent and Easter. They plan to start practicing again on March 4th at 5:15 p.m. They could really use some more voices to join them. If climbing the stairs to sing from the balcony was an issue holding you back from participating, please know that the choir sings from the main floor of the sanctuary. Please consider joining in, what a great way to glorify our God! If you have questions, please contact Jodi Bierschenk.

### Cancellation of Services

Here's a reminder of our policy on cancelled services if the weather gets bad. Services will be held if at all possible; however, if you are in doubt about whether services will be held call the church office at 319-442-3514 and listen to the message there. If it is the normal message, there will be services held as planned; otherwise a cancellation message will be heard. The cancellation message will be recorded at least one hour before the scheduled service. The cancellation will also be posted on the KCRG website ([www.kcrg.com](http://www.kcrg.com)) and television station (channel 9), on our Facebook page (St. John Lutheran - Keystone), and on our webpage at [stjohnkeystone.org](http://stjohnkeystone.org). Pastor Schultz should be able to get to the church no matter what the weather; however, if you feel it is unsafe to come in person because of the weather the service can be watched online.

### Sewing for World Relief

Sewing for World Relief takes place each Tuesday during the winter months in the lower level here at St. John, working from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. If you'd like to help, bring a scissors, needle with a large eye for tying, and a sack lunch if you plan to stay over the noon hour. Come for as long as you'd like. Invite others, they could use more hands to help out! Questions, contact Cindy Oehlerich or Susie Albers.

### Thrivent Choice Dollars

If you have Thrivent Choice Dollars to direct, the deadline to do so is March 31st. Don't let the deadline pass and miss the chance at free money to the organization of your choice. Here's how:

**Online:**

- 1) Visit [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://Thrivent.com/thriventchoice).
- 2) Click on "log in" at the top right of your screen and enter your MyThrivent user ID and password. (If you haven't registered on Thrivent.com, click on "register" to register.)
- 3) Look for your designated Choice Dollars on the right side of the screen.
- 4) Click on "Direct Choice Dollars" in the Thrivent Choice box on your MyThrivent page.
- 5) Search the catalog of organizations to find the organization you want to select.
- 6) Click on "Direct Choice Dollars Now" to direct your designated Choice Dollars to benefit that organization.

**By phone:**

- 1) Call 1-800-847-4836 and when prompted, say "Thrivent Choice"
- 2) When prompted, say "Choice Dollars."
- 3) Say or enter your Social Security number.
- 4) Press 1 to direct Choice Dollars or press 2 to hear the Thrivent Choice program terms and conditions.
- 5) A representative will then work with you to direct Choice Dollars.



### Guest and Visitor Bulletins

We are trying something new by providing our guests/visitors with a bulletin that has all of our liturgy and hymns being used in the day's service printed out in a bulletin. These bulletins are located on table near the offering plates and are labeled "Guest and Visitors Copy". If you see a visitor that the usher may have missed, please offer them a copy.

### Receiving the Loveletter?

A couple of years ago a message was sent out through bulletins and Loveletters that changed the way our monthly Loveletter was made available. We offered different ways that the Loveletter could be sent to you. Those options were having it mailed to you each month, having it emailed to you, or it could be downloaded from our website ([stjohnkeystone.org](http://stjohnkeystone.org)). We have received some questions from members wondering why they no longer receive the publication. Those three options are still available and changes can be made by contacting the church office (319-442-3514).

### Lutheran High School South Concert at CLS

Lutheran High School South from St. Louis will be at Central Lutheran School on February 19th. Their jazz band and wind symphony will be performing an afternoon concert for students. They will also perform an evening concert. Help is needed in providing supper for the students and their staff at 5:30. Following the concert at 7:00 p.m. housing will be needed for the 34 boys and 18 girls that make up the band. They would need to be back at CLS by 7 a.m. to depart for Minneapolis. If either of these needs is something you could help with, please contact Mr. Parris at Central.

### Hy-Vee Receipts

Please save and bring in your Hy Vee receipts from any Cedar Rapids store to help Central Lutheran meet their goal of \$1,100. Any receipts dated from April 1st, 2025 through March 31st, 2026 will be accepted. The current total collected for this year so far is almost to \$600 with 3 1/2 months to go! Here at St. John we have a box in the narthex to put your receipts in. Thanks to all of you who have contributed.

### Dorcas Guild Card Shop

The Dorcas Guild Card Shop, located outside the church office in the overflow area of the education wing, has available cards for all occasions—birthday, get well, anniversary, sympathy, baby, baptism, wedding, confirmation, and more. These beautiful cards are available for just 50¢ per card or \$5.00 per box of 12 cards. Check it out!

#### *Bible Studies at St. John*

*†Sunday Mornings from 10:15 - 11:15 - The Book of Acts*

*†Wednesday mornings at 9:30 - 1 Timothy, soon moving to 2 Timothy*

Please join us for these interesting and informative studies.

Let's get to know Jesus better this year!



### HELP NEEDED

We are always in need of volunteers to help on various committees or with projects. We are always looking for people to serve on the hospitality committee, serve on the altar guild, record the worship service, usher, sing in the choir, serve food at funeral receptions, help with quilting, help with Swaddling Clothes, help with Sunday School or VBS., etc. The list is endless!

One of our newest needs is someone who could update our historical photo display boards that are located as you enter the southeast doors of the church. We have received a large box of photos that are believed to have a connection to St. John. We need a volunteer who would determine if the photo is a duplicate to the ones already displayed or if it should be added to our photo boards.

If you would be interested in helping with any of the above listed opportunities, contact the church office at 319-442-3514.

**Do the math: sin adds to your troubles, subtracts from your peace,  
multiplies your sorrows and divides you from God.**





### Swaddling Clothes

Our next Swaddling Clothes Shopping Day will be held on Saturday, February 14th, with shopping from 9 a.m. until noon. If you can't make it then, we will also be open on Monday, the 16th, from 4:30 until 5:30 p.m. There are no income guidelines to follow. We just ask that to come in you have children in your custody either by birth or court order. We offer a sleeve of diapers and baby wipes each month to everyone who comes in and is in need of them for their children.

If you have donations, please give us a call at the church (319-442-3514) and we can set up a drop off plan for you. We appreciate children's clothing sz. newborn to sz. 10, and any items that would be used for raising children, like strollers, cribs, pack n' plays, highchairs, car seats, blankets, sheets, pacifiers, etc. We aren't taking any toys at this time! If you'd like to donate but don't have the clothing, baby items, etc., here are some other needs we have. We need zipper bags sandwich through jumbo size, batteries (AA, AAA, C, and D), baby wipes, diapers, Pull-Ups for both boys and girls, baby wash, and diaper cream. Swaddling Clothes has a wish list gift registry for non-profits at <http://www.myregistry.com/organization/swaddling-clothes-keystone-ia-keystone-ia/4144665>

Here are a few other ways to help out our Swaddling Clothes program:

\*Drop off unwanted household items and furniture at Stuff, Etc. Consignment Store in Cedar Rapids. Swaddling Clothes has a "charitable store account" there. What this means is that you can bring in your gently used, unwanted items to the Stuff, Etc - Cedar Rapids location and donate your items under Swaddling Clothes-St. John Lutheran Church, Keystone account #36081. This is an opportunity for you to purge unwanted household items, and furniture and help Swaddling Clothes raise money for ongoing expenses. After your items are sold, a portion of each sale is deposited into the Swaddling Clothes consignment account. We can use the money as store credit at Stuff, Etc to purchase needed items or withdraw the money to purchase needed items elsewhere. Keep in mind that we still need your newborn thru size 10 children's clothes and any baby-care related items to be brought here to the church for our "shopping days".

\*Pass along unwanted gift cards and coupons to Swaddling Clothes. We may be able to use them to benefit Swaddling Clothes.

\*When out shopping, ask yourself if Swaddling Clothes could benefit from some of the sale, clearance items.

\*Use your reward points or rebate cash to purchase baby-care items. A couple of great examples of this is something like Kohl's Cash. Rather than letting it expire without using it, perhaps pick up something that Swaddling Clothes could use or Menard's 11% rebate that provides in store credit to make purchases. That could be used to purchase toothbrushes or stocking hats, etc.

\*If you are a Thrivent member, perhaps you can form a Thrivent Action Team to purchase items needed by Swaddling Clothes.

\*Ask to become part of the volunteer group that comes in to sort clothing, prepare diaper packages, display clothing, clean items, etc. They are truly a blessing!

\*Most of all, please pray for the Swaddling Clothes program that we may continue to provide items that some can't afford to purchase on their own.

If you have any questions about the above information, please feel free to ask a member of the committee or contact the church office.

To God be the glory as we serve Him by serving others!

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them,  
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

Matthew 19:14

### Orphan Grain Train

There is a large donation box located in the narthex where we are collecting men's and women's clothing for Orphan Grain Train. The clothing must be clean and in good condition. The clothing will be delivered to Orphan Grain Train at a later date. Visit [www.ogt.org](http://www.ogt.org) to find out what Orphan Grain Train is all about. If you can help with donations, it would be greatly appreciated!





## Central Lutheran School, Newhall, IA

### February 2026- Monthly Newsletter

+Providing students with a quality education built on a firm Christian foundation, so they grow in the knowledge of Jesus as their Savior and become loving servants to others. +



**Greetings from Central Lutheran School!**

**It is that time of year! Valentines, candies, jewelry commercials, and....**

**Central Lutheran School Registration for the 2026-2027 School Year** - Enrollment for current school families will be Feb. 2nd-February 6th for the 2026-27 school year. Reenrollment forms will be sent home soon!. Current families can return the form to the office beginning February 3rd at 8:00 am. Please have your form filled out along with your application fees of \$80 for 3 year old preschool, returning 4 year old preschool, and \$300 for each K-8th grade child. You may list all of your current students on the one sheet. Any new 3 or 4 year old who currently does not attend CLS this school year, that is a member of your family, should fill out the New Student Enrollment. Forms are also on the CLS website. Then starting February 9 enrollment for our supporting and contributing congregations (St. John, Newhall, St. John, Keystone, and St. Stephen's, Atkins) opens. Open enrollment for community members begins on March 2. We are encouraging everyone to fill out an ILSTO form and send it in. Those forms are due by May 1. ESA application through the Odyssey website will open on April 15. Any new families to CLS must have a tour of CLS and meet with the administrator to go over the enrollment process.

Placement is determined on a first-come, first-served basis. This is especially important if your child is in a classroom that is at or near capacity (20 students for K-8 classrooms). If your child's class already has 21-24 students in it, that class will be grandfathered in. However, if the class size drops to 20, that will be the limit for that class and students will then go on a waiting list.

All families attending CLS will need to apply for ESA funds starting April 15. The final day to apply is June 30.

If there are any questions about the application process, (ILSTO, ESA, SPICE) or affording to attend CLS, please don't hesitate to contact Mr. Parris at [principal@centrallutheranschool.org](mailto:principal@centrallutheranschool.org) or 319-223-5271. He will be more than happy to work with you so your child or children will hear about Jesus every day and receive a Christ centered quality education to prepare them to be Christian leaders in the future..

Please help us out in spreading the word and encouraging your neighbors and friends to contact the school for a tour!

**February 19- Lutheran High School South** from St. Louis will be here at Central Lutheran School. Their **jazz band and wind symphony** will be performing an afternoon concert for students. They will also perform an evening concert. **I am needing your help!** They would like us to provide supper for the students and staff at 5:30. If you are interested in helping with this, please contact me. I'd like to put a committee together that would provide this for the group. Then after the 7pm concert, they will need host families to provide a place for their students to sleep overnight. There are 34 boys (16 host families) and 18 girls (8 host families) that will need a place to stay. Some have allergies to cats and or dogs so they cannot stay in those homes. Again, I'm asking for your help in housing these students. They will need to be back at CLS by 7am so they can depart by 7:15 for Minneapolis, MN.

Serving Him!

Philippians 1:3-6,

Franklin O. Parris – Principal,

[principal@centrallutheranschool.org](mailto:principal@centrallutheranschool.org)



### Ushers and Greeters

February 1 (9:00 a.m.):	<b>Greeters:</b> Keith and Wendy Junge. <b>Ushers:</b> Kent Silhanek, Jim and Cathy Buch, Ben and Missy Lennie.
8 (9:00 a.m.):	<b>Greeters:</b> Dean and Kathy Scheel. <b>Ushers:</b> Barbara Hennings, Doug and Colin Buch.
15 (9:00 a.m.):	<b>Greeters:</b> Greg and Carlene Silhanek. <b>Ushers:</b> Eric and Ann Franzenburg, Byran and Tracie Kimm.
18 (6:30 p.m.):	<b>Greeters:</b> Rita Pickering, Pam England. <b>Ushers:</b> Denny and Susie Albers, Brad Sievers, Robert Albertsen, Colby Lennie.
22 (9:00 a.m.):	<b>Greeters:</b> Dan and Donna Busch. <b>Ushers:</b> Wayne Ritscher, Rick Pickering, Todd and Cheryl Hennings.
25 (6:30 p.m.):	<b>Greeters:</b> Keith and Wendy Junge. <b>Ushers:</b> Kent Silhanek, Jim and Cathy Buch, Ben and Missy Lennie.

### Acolytes

February 1 (9:00 a.m.):	Nash
8 (9:00 a.m.):	Emma
15 (9:00 a.m.):	Kenna
22 (9:00 a.m.):	Lauren

### Videographers

February 1 (9:00 a.m.):	Dan Busch
8 (9:00 a.m.):	Rich Oehlerich
15 (9:00 a.m.):	Dave Gahring
22 (9:00 a.m.):	Jim Buch

### Hospitality Committee for February

(February 8)

**Bake:** Ann Franzenburg

**Bake and Serve:** Jodi Bierschenk  
Rhonda Seeck

### Deacons

February 1 (9:00 a.m.):	Jordan Silhanek
8 (9:00 a.m.):	Kent Silhanek
15 (9:00 a.m.):	Richard Oehlerich
18 (6:30 p.m.):	Richard Oehlerich
22 (9:00 a.m.):	Kent Silhanek
25 (6:30 a.m.):	Jordan Silhanek

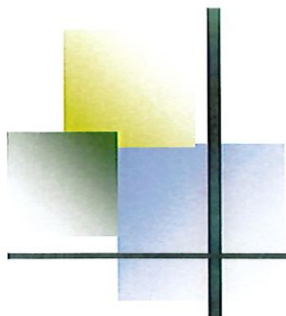
### Altar Guild for February

Carla Albertsen  
Eleanor Roquet



**We are always in need of volunteers to help on various committees, if you'd like to help or need more information, please contact the church office at 319-442-3514.**





# February, 2026

St. John Lutheran Church  
P.O. Box 176—201 Fourth Avenue  
Keystone, Iowa 52249  
Church E-mail: stjnluth@netins.net  
Rev. Josiah Schultz, Pastor  
Pastor's Cell: 913-223-8261

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 7:30 a.m.—Elders Mtg. 9:00 a.m.—Divine Service 10:15 a.m.—Sunday School / Adult Bible Class	2	3 9 a.m. -2 p.m. - Sewing for World Relief 2:00 p.m. - Lutheran Communion at KNCC	4 1:30 - 2:30 - Midweek / Confirmation Class	5 9:30 a.m.— Bible Study	6	7
8 9:00 a.m. - Divine Service 10:15 a.m. - Sunday School 10:15 a.m. - Bible Class	9	10 8:30 a.m. - Pastors Winkel at St. John 9 a.m. -2 p.m. - Sewing for World Relief	11 1:30 - 2:30 - Midweek / Confirmation Class	12 9:30 a.m.— Bible Study	13	14 9:00 - noon—Swaddling Clothes Shopping Day
15 9:00 a.m. - Divine Service 10:15 a.m. - Sunday School / Adult Bible Class 11:00 a.m. - Church Council Meeting	16 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. - Swaddling Clothes Shopping Day	17 9 a.m. -2 p.m. - Sewing for World Relief	Ash Wednesday 18 1:30 - 2:30 - Midweek / Confirmation Class 5:30 - 6:15 p.m.— Lenten Supper 6:30 p.m. - Worship with Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion	19 9:30 a.m.— Bible Study	20	21
22 9:00 a.m.—Divine Service 10:15 a.m.—Sunday School / Adult Bible Class	23	24 9 a.m. -2 p.m. - Sewing for World Relief	25 1:30 - 2:30 - Midweek / Confirmation Class 5:30 - 6:15 p.m.— Lenten Supper 6:30 p.m. - Lenten Worship	26 9:30 a.m.— Bible Study	27	28

## Birthdays

February 1 - Meredith Slapnicka  
3 - Jacob Allen, Dennis Junge  
5 - Nicholas Nelson  
7 - Jena Assman, Joyce Feuerbach  
8 - Grant Franzenburg, Rachelle Kies  
9 - Wayne Junge  
10 - Nathan Albers, Ray Junge  
11 - Karen Noe, Jessica Thomas  
12 - Rhonda Seeck  
13 - Taytin Chamberlin  
14 - Jerald Fintel  
15 - Doug Silhanek  
16 - Brandon Hartkemeyer, Hunter Kupka

## Birthdays (continued)

17 - Andrew Enderle, Will Hennings, Colby Lennie  
18 - Ben Lennie  
19 - Amy Ledvina, Dorothy Selk  
20 - Allen Albers  
22 - Pat Pohlman  
23 - Jared Allen, Jessica Allen  
27 - Pam Jurgemeyer, Drew Rusk  
28 - Elizabeth Hartkemeyer

## Anniversaries

February 4 - Duane and Darlus Selken  
6 - Robert and Phyllis Ritscher  
8 - Bill and Barbara Hennings  
10 - Paul and Jodi Bierschenk  
12 - Kenneth and Elaine Selk  
13 - Doyle and Cindy Reinberg  
19 - Robert and Carla Albertsen  
20 - Dennis and Wendy Albers

