

The Loveletter

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

April, 2026

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

Thursday Bible Class
9:30 to 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

Holy Week at St. John

March 29th	Sunday of Passion/ Palm Sunday	9:00 a.m. Divine Service
April 2nd	Holy (Maundy) Thursday	6:30 p.m. Divine Service
April 2nd – 3rd	Prayer Vigil	8:30 p.m. Thursday – 3:00 p.m. Friday
April 3rd	Good Friday	6:30 p.m. Tenebrae Service
April 4th	Holy Saturday Easter Vigil	6:00 p.m. including Holy Communion
April 5th	Easter Sunrise with Holy Communion	7:00 a.m. Divine Service
April 5th	Easter Continental Breakfast	Following the Sunrise Service. Please head <u>downstairs</u> for rolls, doughnuts, coffee, and juice.
April 5th	Easter Celebration Service	9:00 a.m. This service will not include Holy Communion

Please join us for all of these services!
Easter Sunday the two services are different,
so why not stick around for both!

Prayer Vigil Sign Up Sheet

There is a signup sheet in the narthex asking for volunteers to sign up for 1/2 hour blocks of prayer following the Maundy Thursday worship and continuing until 3:00 p.m. on Good Friday, the hours of Jesus' suffering and death. Prayer ideas will be available if you wish to use them. There are a lot of slots yet to fill.

Easter Vigil Service

St. John will again be hosting an Easter Vigil service on Saturday night, April 4th, at 6:00 p.m. The Easter Vigil connects the days of Holy Week, especially Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, with the culminating celebration of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. We gather to wait in expectation for the news of Christ's resurrection and for His second coming. The Vigil of Easter is comprised of six parts - Service of Light, The Service of Readings, the Service of Baptism, the Service of Prayer, the Service of the Word, and the Service of the Sacrament. Pastor Schultz will be joined with 3 other pastors of the Benton Circuit as we "keep watch" of Christ's return. Contrary to rumors, this awesome service is not extra-long!

Easter Continental Breakfast

Join us downstairs in the fellowship hall for a continental breakfast to be served following the 7:00 a.m. Sunrise Service. The church council will be serving rolls, donuts, coffee and juice. Please head downstairs for some great fellowship and some sweet treats!

"For Us" Midweek Lenten Services

This year's midweek Lenten Services, based on the *For Us* Series, were awesome! The *For Us* series is based on the ancient hymn "O Love, How Deep" (LSB 544). "For us" is not simply a phrase to use because it is easy to repeat, it's a confession of who God is and what He brings in giving us His Son. It helps us understand why God would send His Son to die for us. It's always nice to have other pastors from the circuit preaching the Word to us and also the round-robin makes it less hectic for the pastors as they don't have to prepare a different midweek sermon each week. The theme continues through the Easter Sunrise service. We want to thank all those who volunteered to bring in food for the Lenten suppers that were held before each service. There was always a nice array of food and good fellowship!

Vacation Bible School

The date has been set for Vacation Bible School here at St. John. Please save the dates of **June 8th through 12th** with VBS being held from 9 a.m. until 11:30 each day. The theme this year is *Tropical Trek - Jesus Comes to Seek and Save*. The online registration is now on our webpage (stjohnkeystone.org) and our Facebook page. If you'd prefer paper registration, contact the church office. If you'd like to help with VBS please contact Mary Sievers or the church office.

Needed for crafts are the cardboard centers from paper towels/toilet paper, and colored tissue paper like would be used in gift bags. If you have any of these items they may be left in the church office. Save the date, register, invite others, and join us!

Sewing Group Quilts to Be on Display

The Quilting/Sewing Group here at St. John have met each Tuesday since January to work on quilts for Lutheran World Relief, fundraisers, seminary students, and other service organizations in and around Iowa. These quilts and kits will be displayed on **Sunday, April 12th** here at the church. If you desire, you may purchase a displayed quilt for a free-will donation, with proceeds being used to offset shipping costs. These shipping costs have raised significantly since 2020. LWR's approximate cost to transport, process, store and deliver quilts and kits near and far is \$4.00 per item! LWR spends around \$3.3 million to operate this program, distributing about \$20 million worth of quilts and kits each year.

In 2025, 114,038 quilts and 212,425 different kits were shipped to those in need through Lutheran World Relief. Many of those remained here in the U.S. going to disaster victims of flooding, wildfires, and hurricanes. Others were shipped overseas to care for communities in need around the world.

After April 12th, the quilts that were sewn here at St. John will be taken to the Keystone Nursing Care Center for the residents to admire. The quilts and kits will then be boxed up and will be taken to the pickup point in Cedar Rapids (Trinity Lutheran, the ingathering spot) with trucks picking up the items on Saturday, April 18th. From there, the items are delivered to a LWR warehouse in preparation for shipping.

Thank you to these ladies for all the hard work they have done to prepare these kits and quilts! If you'd like to make a donation to help offset those shipping costs, there will be a basket in the narthex on April 12th, or mark an envelope and drop it in the offering plate.

Supporting Our Building Fund

We give thanks to God for His continued provision in caring for our church and parsonage. Recently, necessary pipe work for both buildings required the use of a significant portion of our building fund. As a result, the fund has been largely depleted. If you are able, we invite you to prayerfully consider supporting the building fund so that we may be prepared for future needs and continue to care for the property entrusted to us. If you would like to support this fund, you are invited to do so as the Lord leads you. Gifts may be designated for the "Building Fund." Above all, we thank you for your prayers and faithful support of the Lord's work among us. We thank you for your continued prayers and for the many ways you support the work of Christ in this place.

Quarterly Voters' Meeting

A Quarterly Voters' Meeting is scheduled for Sunday morning, April 19th, following our worship service, approximately 10:15 a.m. On the agenda so far is organ repair options. Please watch upcoming bulletins for more items as they come in. Hope you will stay for this meeting.



Swaddling Clothes Update

A Swaddling Clothes “shopping day” will be held on Saturday, April 11th, from 9 a.m. until noon, and on Monday, April 13th, from 4:30 until 5:30 p.m. We have just changed from winter to spring/summer clothing. During March, we had 29 families come in to pick up items that their families needed. We’d love to have more. Help us by telling others about our program. We have brochures in the narthex to take and share with others or you can direct them to our website at www.stjohnkeystone.org or our Facebook page, Swaddling Clothes-St.

John Lutheran Church, Keystone, Iowa.

Each month at Swaddling Clothes we offer gently used clothing from size newborn up to size 10, along with our usual baby and motherhood items including maternity clothes. There are no income guidelines to follow, everyone is welcome to come in and shop. Everything is free! We just ask that those coming in to shop have children in their custody either by birth or by court order. We offer a sleeve of diapers and baby wipes each month to those who comes in for each of their children in need of them.

We are always in need of good, used children’s clothing! If you are a mom who has been sorting through clothing in your children’s drawers and find that they have outgrown some, please consider donating to us here at Swaddling Clothes. Another help would be to watch clearance items at your favorite retail store. Items get marked down tremendously if they aren’t selling or are out of season, or perhaps you are planning a garage sale. If you have items that don’t sell, we will take them! Contact the church at 319.442.3514 for drop-off instructions.

We also have a charitable account at Stuff, Etc. in Cedar Rapids where you can donate household items, furniture, anything but children’s clothing (we want those!). If you give them the Swaddling Clothes information we will receive a portion of the sale when your items sell. Check out the Stuff, Etc—Cedar Rapids website to see what items they are accepting and for drop off options. They strictly enforce limits and what they accept seasonally. You will need to tell them the account number for Swaddling Clothes, St. John Lutheran Church, Keystone at the time of drop off - #36081 and they may ask for the church’s phone number - 319-442-3514.

We are often asked "what do we need" or "what should I be looking for when I'm out shopping" or "what are some items that you routinely need replenished"? Swaddling Clothes has a wish list gift registry for nonprofit organizations at myregistry.com , then enter Swaddling Clothes, and a drop down pops up for you to choose Swaddling Clothes -Keystone, IA. The registry lists ideas and suggestions of items that are needed on a regular basis. There often isn't money left in the budget after purchasing diapers and baby wipes for many of the items on this registry. These items can be purchased through the registry and will be shipped directly to Swaddling Clothes or they can be purchased in-store and dropped off at the church. Please share this information with anyone who may be interested in helping us help others. Thank you for your continued generosity and community support!

Two weeks ago we had a great group of volunteers come in to help sort through the many donations that we had recently received and to help get items ready for the shopping days coming up in April. A lots of things were accomplished that morning and we truly appreciate all the help! If you’d like to be part of that volunteer group, please contact us. We also have volunteers who take baskets of clothing from the narthex to take home to launder. There are several baskets there again if you’d like to launder a basket or two. If you could have them back to the church by April 8th, that would be great!

To God be the glory for the success of this mission of our church!

Our 2026 Missions

Our “mission” envelopes this year will be divided between Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca and the support of the Rev. Jason Groth, missionary to Belize. Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca is a year-round camp, retreat center, and public family campground affiliated with Iowa District East/LCMS. In a unique outdoor setting, campers are given an opportunity to begin and end each day with the Word of God and prayer, learn more about Jesus Christ through Bible study, make lasting Christian friendships, sing camp songs, learn a variety of recreation skills, and enjoy their favorite all-camp games with new friends. Our 2nd mission is the support of Pastor Jason Groth doing missionary work in Belize. Pastor Groth and Emily have 4 children. They help plant Lutheran churches and coordinate the operations of Camp Concordia in Belmopan, Belize. Please note that if you would like your mission offerings to go to other places, just note that on your “mission” envelope.

Easter Flowers

Thank you to the following people who purchased the beautiful flowers that will adorn our sanctuary on Easter morning. Please feel free to take your flowers home with you after the 9:00 service. Please leave the drain pan at the church. The plants have name labels on them. Please look for your name and take that one home with you!

- ◆ Jim and Cathy Buch - 1 Hydrangea in memory of all saints gone before us.
◆ Keith and Wendy Junge - 2 Hyacinths in memory of Milford and Ethel Wardenburg, and Curtis and Ruth Junge.
◆ Ruth Oehlerich - 2 Easter lilies in memory of Darwin Oehlerich and Brandon Stockdale.
◆ Dennis Andresen - 1 Easter lily in memory of Joyce Mae Andresen and other loved ones.
◆ Rosemary Krutzfeldt - 2 Easter lilies in memory of loved ones.
◆ Mike, Rhonda, and Joan Seeck - 1 Hydrangea in memory of loved ones.
◆ Pam England - 1 Lily and 1 Tulip plant in memory of Robert Reinhardt.
◆ Kathy and Kevin Ebert - 2 Hyacinths in memory of Loren, Thelma, Stacey Kusel, Jim, Peggy, Phil, Max and Lois Weaver.
◆ Greg and Carlene Silhanek - 1 Daisy mum in memory of loved ones.
◆ Karen Noe - 2 Daisy mums in memory of Harley Noe.
◆ Darlene Harder - 1 Hydrangea in memory of Roger Harder.
◆ Brad and Mary Sievers - 1 Easter lily and 1 tulip plant in memory of those gone before us.
◆ Matt and Cherise Thacker - 2 potted Tulip plants in memory of loved ones lost.
◆ Don and Eleanor Roquet - 2 potted Tulip plants in memory of Donald W. and Carol Roquet; and Herbert and Edna Bauer.
◆ Rita Pickering - 2 Easter lilies in memory of Libbie Best and Peggy Seeber.
◆ Justin and Amie Slapnicka - 1 daisy mum in memory of loved ones.
◆ Bill and Barbara Hennings - 1 Kalanchoe in memory of Ervin and Bernice Hennings.
◆ Dan and Donna Busch - 1 Cyclamen plant and 1 Calla lily in memory of loved ones.
◆ Denny and Susie Albers - 1 potted Tulip plant in memory of Art and Lorene; and Delbert and Madelene.
◆ Pat Franzenburg - 1 Easter lily in memory of husband, Don.

Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca Sumer Camp 2026 - Free to Serve

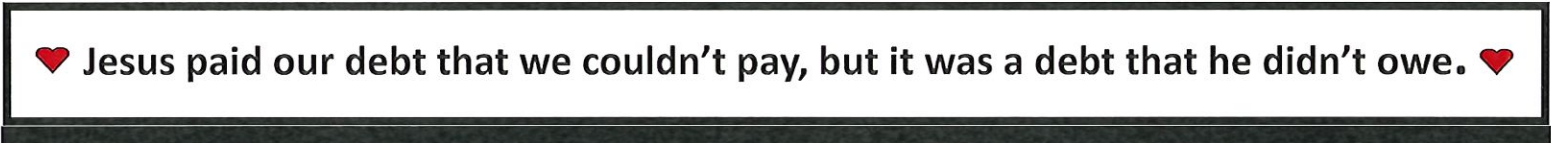
What does it mean to be free? Does it mean I can just do whatever I want? After all, I'm "free to do so," right? Wrong! In all that we say or do, we are serving someone, something, or some purpose. Let us consider this as well as who and what our words and actions reflect. After all, "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). While in this wrestling match, it is easy to only consider ourselves and when we're given "freedom," to use it as an opportunity to display our sinful nature. However, through Jesus' death and resurrection, this wrestling match has already been won for us! Therefore, "You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness" (Romans 6:18). In Jesus, we see and can now live out what it truly means to be "free," serving one another through love.

Each day at Camp is spent studying God's Word. The Bible study is centered around a theme from Scripture. Though every camper learns the same theme, each program's Bible study is modified to fit the age group of the program. Campers also participate in multiple devotions each day that fit the Biblical theme and teaches them about Christ. Bible studies and daily devotions are led by trained camp staff.

Io-Dis-E-Ca offers lots of different age appropriate camps to choose from. Check it out on their webpage or scan the QR code from the poster hanging in the narthex. There are discounts if you register early. There are also camp scholarships available for campers who will be attending Camp for the first time. Also, remember that St. John will pay 1/2 of the camp fee up to \$150 for members of St. John.

Summer staff is needed at camp. Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca is in need of college-aged, LCMS young adults to serve as cabin counselors this summer. Camp counselors act as Christian role models, teachers, activity leaders, and friends to all of the children that pass through their gates. For more information, you may contact Program Director, Alec Deppe at 319-848-4187 or programdirector@iodiseca.org or head to campiodiseca.org/summer-camp-3/staff/.

They are also looking for staff members to fill kitchen roles: cook & dishwasher. If you are interested in serving in the kitchen this summer, please contact Camp Director, Dylan Lampe at 319-848-4187 or director@iodiseca.org.





Central Lutheran School, Newhall, IA
April 2026- Monthly Newsletter for churches
 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.

Motto: See Jesus, Seek Knowledge, Serve Joyfully



Happy **EASTER** Greetings from Central Lutheran School!

Registration for the 2026-2027 School Year - Enrollment for next year continues! As of the writing of this article, we only have a few spots left in our afternoon preschool class, Kindergarten has only three seats left, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 7th grades are full, and 4th and 8th grade have 7 seats left and 6th grade has 3 seats left!! Overall we are looking at 194 students PS-8, 168 students K-8.. Please help us in filling those seats by spreading the word about CLS. Your help is greatly appreciated in encouraging parents to take a tour of the school and meet with teachers and me. Prayers don't hurt either! Pray the Lord will encourage parents to enroll their child or children at CLS!

Staffing for next year - As for staffing for next year, we have 1 teaching position to fill and that is for a PE teacher who will also be our Athletic Director and help with math/reading. All the Concordia Universities have been contacted and they do not have any May candidates. Our CLS Call Committee continues to look through Synodical forms. So, if you know the name of someone that would be a great PE/AD teacher, please let me know. Thank you.

TACOS and TUNES! - Thursday, April 16 from 5:30-7:30 CLS will be serving a taco bar. There will be a free will offering. All funds raised will go towards our band program at CLS. After enjoying tacos, please stay and listen to our students share their musical talent in their performances for our fine arts night! We will also have student art work available for you to see. I hope to see you here!

CLS FOREVER CENTRAL EVENT! April 11 from 4:30-10 at Tara Hills Country Club is the Forever Central event. A dinner, music bingo, silent auction (Iowa and ISU metal can recyclable containers, place to stay in FL, CLS swag basket, and more!) and lots of information on how you can help the CLS Endowment Fund. Information will be shared on what funds have been used for and how we would like to continue to improve the fund for the future of CLS. Registration for the evening ends on March 27 so the committee knows how many to plan for.

Thank you for your continued support of Central Lutheran School. Thank you for your financial support, prayers, and items that have been donated. We greatly appreciate it!

Philippians 1:3-6,

Franklin O. Parris – Principal,

principal@centrallutheranschool.org

Bible Studies at St. John

† **Sunday mornings from 10:15 - 11:15** - Luther's Large Catechism, our newest study has begun.

It's not too late to join in! Discover the heart of our faith through Martin Luther's Large Catechism. We'll explore why we should study the Catechism, along with the Ten Commandments, Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Sacraments, using God's Word throughout.

† **Thursday mornings from 9:30 - 10:30** - The Book of Titus

Please join us for these interesting, informative, and thought provoking studies!

JESUS



Ushers and Greeters

- April 2 (6:30 p.m.): **Greeters:** Keith and Wendy Junge. **Ushers:** Kent Silhanek, Jim and Cathy Buch, Ben and Missy Lennie.
- 3 (6:30 p.m.): **Greeters:** Dean and Kathy Scheel. **Ushers:** Barbara Hennings, Doug and Colin Buch.
- 4 (6:00 p.m.): **Greeters:** Greg and Carlene Silhanek. **Ushers:** Eric and Ann Franzenburg, Byran and Tracie Kimm.
- 5 (7:00 a.m.): **Greeters:** Rita Pickering and Pam England. **Ushers:** Denny and Susie Albers, Brad Sievers, Robert Albertsen, Colby Lennie.
- 5 (9:00 a.m.): **Greeters:** Dan and Donna Busch. **Ushers:** Wayne Ritscher, Rick Pickering, Todd and Cheryl Hennings.
- 12 (9:00 a.m.): **Greeters:** Keith and Wendy Junge. **Ushers:** Kent Silhanek, Jim and Cathy Buch, Ben and Missy Lennie.
- 19 (9:00 a.m.): **Greeters:** Dean and Kathy Scheel. **Ushers:** Barbara Hennings, Doug and Colin Buch.
- 26 (9:00 a.m.): **Greeters:** Greg and Carlene Silhanek. **Ushers:** Eric and Ann Franzenburg, Byran and Tracie Kimm.

Acolytes

- April 3 (6:30 p.m.): Ciara
- 5 (7:00 a.m.): Nash
- 5 (9:00 a.m.): Emma
- 12 (9:00 a.m.): Cheyenne
- 19 (9:00 a.m.): Tinley
- 26 (9:00 a.m.): Kaylee

Videographers

- April 5 (7:00 a.m.): Dave Gahring
- 12 (9:00 a.m.): Rich Oehlerich
- 19 (7:00 p.m.): Jim Buch
- 26 (9:00 a.m.): Dean Scheel

Deacons

- April 2 (6:30 p.m.): Jordan Silhanek
- 3 (6:30 p.m.): Jordan Silhanek
- 4 (6:00 p.m.): Kent Silhanek
- 5 (7:00 a.m.): Kent Silhanek
- 5 (9:00 a.m.): Kent Silhanek
- 12 (9:00 a.m.): Doug Buch
- 19 (9:00 a.m.): Kent Silhanek
- 26 (9:00 a.m.): Byran Kimm

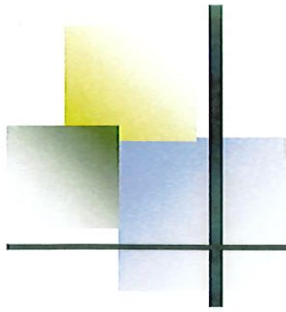
Altar Guild for April

- Relda Pickering
- Wendy Junge

Hospitality Committee for April

- (April 12) **CLS Hosanna Choir is here**
- Bake:** Carla Albertsen, Carlene Silhanek
- Bake and Serve:** Donna Busch, Connie Pickering





April, 2026

St. John Lutheran Church
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 Rev. Josiah Schultz, Pastor
 Pastor's Cell: 913-223-8261

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. - Midweek / Confirmation Class	2 6:30 p.m. - Maundy Thursday <=====Prayer Vigil =====>	3 6:30 p.m. - Good Friday Tenebrae Service	4 6:00 p.m.— Easter Vigil at St. John
<i>Easter</i> 7:00 a.m. - Easter Divine Service 8:15 a.m. - Continental Breakfast 9:00 a.m. - Easter Matins Service No SS or Bible Class	5	6	7 9 a.m. -2 p.m. - Sewing for World Relief 2:00 p.m. - Lutheran Communion	8 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. - Midweek / Confirmation Class	9 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. - Adult Bible Class	10 9:00 a.m. to noon- Swaddling Clothes Shopping Day
9:00 a.m.- Divine Service CLS Hosanna Choir here 10:15 a.m.— Sunday School / Adult Bible Class 11:00 a.m. - Church Council Mtg.	11	12	13	14	15	16
	4:30 to 5:30 p.m. - Swaddling Clothes	9 a.m. -2 p.m. - Sewing for World Relief	1:30 - 2:30 p.m. - Midweek / Confirmation Class	9:30 - 10:30 a.m. - Adult Bible Class	9:30 - 10:30 a.m. - Adult Bible Class	9:30 - 10:30 a.m. - Adult Bible Class
9:00 a.m.- Divine Service 10:15 - Sunday School 10:15 - Quarterly Voters' Meeting	17	18	19	20	21	22
			1:30 - 2:30 p.m. - Midweek / Confirmation Class	9:30 - 10:30 a.m. - Adult Bible Class	9:30 - 10:30 a.m. - Adult Bible Class	9:30 - 10:30 a.m. - Adult Bible Class
9:00 a.m. - Divine Service 10:15 a.m. - Sunday School / Adult Bible Class	23	24	25	26	27	28
			1:30 - 2:30 p.m. - Midweek / Confirmation Class	9:30 - 10:30 a.m. - Adult Bible Class	9:30 - 10:30 a.m. - Adult Bible Class	9:30 - 10:30 a.m. - Adult Bible Class

Birthdays

- April
- 1 - Ryan Buhr, Edith Pearson
 - 2 - James Pierce, Jayden Pierce
 - 3 - Denise Andresen, Ryan Clemann, Bertha Ellis
 - 4 - Rob Miller, Ryan Miller
 - 5 - Casey Klocke, Luke Lazenby
 - 6 - Cameron Clemann, Cadan Stull
 - 7 - Jackson Hartkemeyer
 - 8 - Desiree Richardson
 - 9 - Erin Gatewood, Pastor Schultz
 - 11 - Beau Stehcon
 - 13 - Devan Lyne
 - 14 - Lauren Hartkemeyer
 - 15 - Karsyn Semelroth, Melisa Venneman
 - 16 - Tyler Franzenburg, Dennis Pohlman, John Taschner

Birthdays (continued)

- 18 - Justin Harder
- 21 - Yvonne Kuch
- 22- Cole Junge, Doug Rusk
- 23 - Brodie Chamberlin
- 25 - Rebecca Weber
- 26 - Tim Kapucian, Logan Klopping,
Kyle McManemy, Zach McManemy,
Darwin Schlotterbeck
- 27 - Cheryl Hennings, Janetta Schmuecker
- 28 - Eric Sievers
- 29 - Kiley Rusk
- 30 - Paul Bierschen, Tracy Jurgens



Anniversaries

- April
- 3 - Jared and Harley Allen
 - 6 - James and Samantha Calhoun
 - 6 - Mark and Deb Kromminga
 - 9 - Kevin and Kathy Ebert
 - 10 - Zachary and Hannah Johnson
 - 20 - Dave and Tammy Monson

