



The Loveletter

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

January, 2024

Epiphany - January 6th

December 25 (Christmas Day) begins the 'season' of Christmas which lasts **12** days until the festival of Epiphany on January 6. Epiphany, along with Easter and Pentecost is one of the three oldest and most important festivals observed by the early Christian church. The word Epiphany comes from the Greek word *epiphania* which can be translated as **appearing**. Epiphany has a variety of meanings closely related to one another; the shining of a light, a manifestation, an appearance, or a revelation. Epiphany "illuminates" or reveals to us the divinity of our Lord who was made known to the whole world for the first time by the visit of the magi from the east. There is no mention of how many wise men visited but tradition says three, probably because there were three gifts mentioned (gold, frankincense and myrrh). The Hebrews expected for centuries a star as sign of the birth of the Messiah. It was the shining of the **light** (the star) that brought the magi to Jesus who is the "a **light** for revelation to the Gentiles" Luke 2:32. Epiphany is a festival day of **light** and is denoted by the liturgical color **white**. It ushers in the season of Epiphany which lasts until the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday. Jesus said of himself, "I am the **light** of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the **light** of life." (John 8:12)

Congregational Meeting

A Congregational Meeting was held on Sunday, December 31st, at 9:45 a.m. The purpose of the meeting was to determine what the congregation wants to do next regarding our call process. A vote was taken and it was decided to have our name put on the list to hopefully receive a newly graduated seminary student. Placement of pastors (call day) is usually the end of April. We have the option to call a specific seminary student and with the help of the district office that is our intention. Please continue to pray for the pastor which God has in mind to become the pastor at St. John. More information as it becomes available.

Quarterly Voters' Meeting

A Quarterly Voters' Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 14th, at approximately 11:30, following our worship service that morning. On the agenda will be any updates available concerning our call process, the presentation and approval of the 2024 budget, and a vote to determine who will receive our 2024 mission envelope offerings. Please try to attend this meeting regarding the business portion of St. John.

Church Council Installation

The 2024 St. John Church Council will be installed during the worship service on Sunday, January 7th. During the elections held at the Voters' Meeting in October, Barbara Hennings, Kent Silhanek, and Richard Oehlerich were elected to the church council. Those remaining on the council include Doug Buch, Wayne Ritscher, Justin Slapnicka, Jordan Silhanek, Ann Franzenburg, and Mary Sievers. Leaving the council after serving two 3-year terms are Kathy Scheel and Ben Lennie. (Ben has agreed to remain as long as needed to continue working with the call process.) We want to thank both Kathy and Ben for their dedication and service to St. John for the past 6 years. A job well done! Please keep all of our church council members in your prayers as they begin their duties for 2024 here at St. John.

THE LOVELETTER

Published Monthly by

St. John Lutheran Church
(Missouri Synod)
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WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday Worship
10:30 a.m.

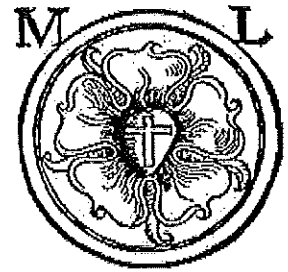
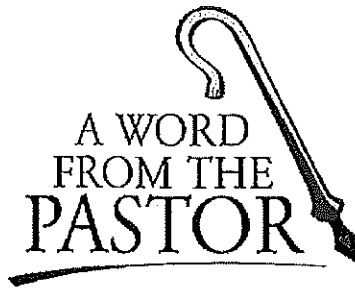
BIBLE STUDIES

Bible Study
7:00 p.m. on Wednesdays
@ St. Andrew

Doctrine Study
9:00 a.m. on Thursdays

SWADDLING CLOTHES

Store open second
Saturday of each month
from 9 to noon and
the following Monday
evening from 4:30 - 6:00



"Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus... (2 Peter 1:2),"

The word January comes from the Latin word *Janua*, which means a door from which you may look both ways. It's sort of like opening a door in the middle of a long hallway and looking both directions. January also comes from *Janus*, the Roman god of beginnings, who is depicted as facing both ways. Looking back and looking forward.

One of the traditions at the end of a year is that we look back at what happened in the previous year and we look forward to the New Year and what it may hold for us. Another custom is to make resolutions or a list of the things you would like to accomplish and/or improvements you would like to make in the new year.

What seems to be almost always at the top of our list?.....lose weight?...start an exercise program, and this year stick to it...read more...stay healthy...how about save more for your kids' college, a vacation, or that ever closer retirement? In the business world they make sales projections and quotas for the new year. What do you look forward to this new year and what would be on your New Year's resolution list?

I came across this humorous list of resolutions that pastors would like to hear. As with all humor, what makes it funny is there is usually at least a grain of truth in what is said. Here is the top ten list of resolutions for 2024 that pastors would like to hear:

1. "Hey, it's my turn to sit in the front pew!"
2. "Pastor, your sermon was so good that I didn't notice it ran longer than usual!"
3. "I'd love to volunteer to be a Sunday School teacher!"
4. "Pastor, I want to go with you on some absent saint evangelism calls!"
5. "Because we're all here, let's start Divine Service early!"
6. "Pastor, let me mow the church and parsonage yard for you this year!"
7. "Nothing inspires me like giving more this year!"
8. "Pastor, I would love to serve on the church council!"
9. "I love it when we sing hymns that I don't know!"
10. "Pastor, we'd like to send you and Sandra to a Bible seminar in the Bahamas!"

As I look back I have much to be thankful for. Among them, I have been called to serve and be a shepherd of a congregation (St. Andrew) these past 15+ years and your shepherd (St. John) these past 15+ months. I thank God for those who come to the Divine Service, Bible Class and Wednesday night Bible classes. I thank you parents for bringing up your children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. I thank all of you who have served and/or continue to serve on boards and the church council. I thank-you for your acts of kindness, your gifts and your cards and notes that lift me up regularly. I am truly blessed because of you. Thank-you all!

This coming year I have but one resolution and that is that I resolve **"to know nothing while I (am) with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."** (1 Corinthians 2:2) Have a blessed New Year in Christ!!

Thank You

Thanks to all those who purchased the poinsettias that adorned our sanctuary this Advent and Christmas season. The 16 beautiful poinsettias were donated by:

- Dennis Andresen (1) in memory of his wife, Joyce Mae.
- Tim and Jay Feuerbach (2) in memory of loved ones.
- Darlene Harder (1) in memory of her husband, Roger.
- Joan Seeck (1) in memory of her husband, John.
- Mike and Rhonda Seeck and family (1) in memory of loved ones.
- Keith and Wendy Junge (2) in memory of Milford and Ethel Wardenburg and Curtis and Ruth Junge.
- Denny and Susie Albers (1) in memory of their parents.
- Mardean Kromminga (2) in memory of deceased family members.
- Don and Eleanor Roquet (2) in memory of Don W. and Carol Roquet, and Herbert and Edna Bauer.
- Ruth Oehlerich (1) in memory of Darwin Oehlerich and Brandon Stockdale.
- Dan and Donna Busch (1) in memory of loved ones.
- Brad and Mary Sievers (1) in memory of loved ones gone before us.

If you are wishing to take your poinsettias home to enjoy, please do so as soon as possible. The plastic drain pans are to remain at the church.

Loveletter Changes

Two years ago when we had to be out of the church because of the derecho damage repair we didn't have easy access to a copy machine to send out the Loveletter to all members. We instead placed the newsletter just on our webpage for people to access. At that time we got a lot of feedback. There were lots of opinions about the whole thing. If you are happy with what you are receiving right now, that is great, we don't need to hear from you, but if you want to change how you receive the Loveletter, call the church office. Here are some options:

- 1) we will continue to have a copy on our webpage at stjohnkeystone.org if you have computer access you could get it that way,
- 2) if you let us know your email address, we can send a copy of the Loveletter via an email to you.
- 3) if you wish to receive a mailed copy, we will send a copy of the Loveletter to you.

Thank You

A big thank you to all who participated in the Giving Tree, Food Basket Program, and those who helped support the Benton County Food Bank this year.

The food for the Food Bank was delivered right after Thanksgiving and a check for \$480.00 was sent to the Food Bank in December after all donations were received. They were very appreciative!

We had 40 names on the Giving Tree from our area that were in need of a little help with Christmas giving. The gifts designated to them were delivered on December 18th. Each gift had a Christian message attached to it. Our thanks to all who helped with the Giving Tree and especially to the ladies who did some last minute shopping for us. What a great help that was!

Thank you also to the group of ladies who came in on December 18th to put 12 food baskets together. The meal was delivered in a laundry basket that the families could keep. In each basket there was a meal to serve a family of 6. Each basket included a 3 pound ham, a 5 pound bag of potatoes, 2 cans of canned corn or green beans, Hawaiian dinner rolls, canned peaches, an apple pie, along with a Christmas ornament. We appreciate the many donations that we received to make all of these projects possible!

2024 Offering Envelopes

If you haven't already picked them up, the 2024 offering envelopes can be found in the southeast corner of the sanctuary. They are arranged in alphabetical order. If you wanted envelopes and can't find any with your name, please contact Donna in the church office. Please discard any unused 2023 envelopes and start using the 2024 envelopes as most numbers have changed from last year. The 2023 contribution statements will be available in mid-January.



Swaddling Clothes Update

Our next "Swaddling Clothes" shopping day is scheduled for the second Saturday of the month which is Saturday, January 13th, with shopping from 9 a.m. to noon. For those who can't attend on Saturday, we will be open on Monday afternoon, January 15th, from 4:30 until 6:00 p.m.

We have been so blessed by the many donations we have received! We are taking donations of good, gently used winter children's clothing from newborn to size 10, along with maternity clothing, and items used for raising children, like highchairs, cribs, baby swings, 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. We are very appreciative of the many volunteers who take the clothing baskets that we set out in the narthex that need to be laundered.

We had preschool visitors at our Swaddling Clothes in December. There were 2 classes of preschoolers for a total of 44 children each bringing donations rather than sharing gifts with classmates. We are so appreciative of their giving!

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

*Drop off unwanted household items, furniture and adult clothing at Stuff, Etc. Consignment Store in Cedar Rapids. Swaddling Clothes also 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, furniture and adult clothing, 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 maternity clothes, 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 the after-Christmas sales, ask yourself if Swaddling Clothes could benefit from some of the 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.

*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.

*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

College Hill Lutheran Retreat

The college students of College Hill Lutheran Church & Brammer Student Center in Cedar Falls invite high school students to a weekend retreat featuring the LCMS U campus ministry near the campus of the University of Northern Iowa. The high school students will get a little taste of collegiate life and learn what it means to be a Lutheran student on a secular campus. This will be taking place the weekend of January 27th and 28th. Check out the bulletin board in the narthex here at St. John or their website <https://college-hill.org/high-school-weekend/> for all the details.

Forever Central Dinner

Central Lutheran's **Forever Central** Dinner will be taking place on Saturday, February 17th, at Wildcat Golf Course in Shellburg. This is to help the endowment fund. Tickets are \$80/person or \$150/couple and include dinner, drinks, dueling pianos, and fun! Help raise dollars so that CLS can forever be in existence. To purchase tickets or to donate, visit CentralLutheranSchool.org/forevercentraldinner. Sign up by January 29th.

St. John Quilting Ladies

During the winter months at St. John there is a group of ladies who volunteer on Tuesdays to create and sew beautiful quilts. This year a total of 104 quilts were donated!

- + 43 quilts were donated to Lutheran World Relief along with 5 baby care kits.
- + 13 quilts were donated to the Willis Dady Shelter in Cedar Rapids. *Willis Dady Homeless Services* provides shelter, case management, homeless preventions, and veteran support for Cedar Rapids, Iowa and the surrounding area.
- + 6 quilts were donated to Treasures Resale Store in Cedar Rapids. *Treasures Quality Resale Shoppe, Shop for Life!* is a resale store benefitting Bridgehaven Pregnancy Support Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. They have clothing for the whole family, kitchen, home décor, toys, collectibles, and more! Treasures is located at 405 8th Avenue next to Bills Brothers Furniture and just down from Mercy Hospital (Emergency Room side). This is a great store with quality items, check it out!
- + 3 quilts were donated to Central Lutheran School's Spring fundraising auction.
- + 9 quilts were donated to Swaddling Clothes here at St. John.
- + 17 quilts were donated to Orphan Grain Train warehouse in Clemons, Iowa. OGT mission: Sharing resources and bringing Christ's name and character to needy people both far and near. Orphan Grain Train is a Christian volunteer network that ships donated food, clothing, medical supplies, and other needed items to people in 71 different countries including the USA.
- + 5 quilts were donated to Central Furniture Rescue in Cedar Rapids. *Central Furniture Rescue* provides furniture and household items at no cost to individuals and families who are transitioning out of homelessness and into their own places to live.
- + 8 quilts were donated to Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca for their fundraising auction and were sold for a total of \$700.

They also have some quilts saved back for local benefits and fundraisers. Please contact the church office if you know of a worthy cause who we could benefit from a quilt donation.

The quilting ladies will start meeting in the lower level at the church again on Tuesday, January 9th, and will meet each Tuesday as long as weather permits. They are always looking for people to help. If you'd be interested, 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 your schedule permits, they usually quit around 2:00 p.m. Also, in order to make diapers and a few other items for Orphan Grain Train and World Relief they are in need of a Serger machine. They would welcome anyone interested to come with theirs, or would be willing to allow the group to borrow one. If you have any questions, please contact Cindy Oehlerich.

Central Lutheran Parent Information Meeting

A CLS Parent Information Meeting is being held on Monday, January 8th, at 6:30 p.m. The Central Board of Directors will be sharing with parents about the cost to educate a child at CLS, next year's tuition, other fees, the state of Central, and enhancements to the school, as well as the dates for registration. This information is for EVERY parent with students preschool through 7th grade for the 2024-2025 school year. Tell friends and neighbors as well in case they are thinking about applying at CLS next school year. One night only, so please plan to attend!

Staff Openings at Central Lutheran School

Central Lutheran has some staff openings for the 2024-2025 school year. They are looking to fill the following positions:

- 1st Grade Teacher (Mrs. Williamson is retiring)
- 2nd Grade Teacher (Mrs. Meyer is our new Student Resources teacher)
- 3rd Grade Teacher (Mrs. Hines is being Called elsewhere)
- Assistant Cook (about 4 and a half hours a day, 5 days a week)

If you have a name or could encourage someone you know, please have them contact Mr. Parris at 319-223-5271 or email to principal@centrallutheranschool.org.

Treat others faults as graciously as you do your own.



Ushers and Greeters

January 7 (10:30 a.m.): Greeters: Keith and Wendy Junge. Usher: Kent Silhanek.
 14 (10:30 a.m.): Greeters: Dean and Kathy Scheel. Ushers: Bill and Barbara Hennings, Doug and Colin Buch.
 21 (10:30 a.m.): Greeters: Greg and Carlene Silhanek. Ushers: Eric and Ann Franzenburg, Byran and Tracie Kimm.
 28 (10:30 a.m.): Greeters: Rita Pickering and Joyce Brunssen. Ushers: Denny and Susie Albers, Brad Sievers, Robert Albertsen, Colby Lennie.

Acolytes

January 7 (10:30 a.m.): Lauren
 14 (10:30 a.m.): Hunter
 21 (10:30 a.m.): Kenna
 28 (10:30 a.m.): Emma

Altar Guild

Connie Pickering
 Beth Hartkemeyer

Videographers

January 7: Dave
 14: Rich
 21: Dean
 28: Dan

Deacons

January 7 (10:30 a.m.): Wayne
 14 (10:30 a.m.): Ben
 21 (10:30 a.m.): Kent
 28 (10:30 a.m.): Jordan



Hospitality Volunteers

It had been brought to the attention of the church council that some people miss the hospitality treats that used to be served each Sunday after worship. The council decided that since we are still in vacancy and worship fairly late, serving cookies at noon may not be the best idea, so they decided to try it this way until we have a pastor of our own and possibly an earlier worship time. A calendar has been placed in the narthex and if you have a special date that you'd like to serve goodies for (birthday, anniversary, just like to bake), sign up on that date and bring the goodies to share before the worship service like 10:00 a.m. You will be responsible for serving, cleaning up, etc. Questions, contact the church office.

Cancellation of Services

As winter weather is close at hand, we'd like to share St. John's cancellation policy with you. We intend to hold services as scheduled whenever possible; however, if roads are bad Pastor Lingard needs to be able to arrive safely. If you don't feel that you can safely arrive at church, by all means don't try, stay safe! If you are in doubt about whether activities or services will be held because of bad weather, 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 our webpage (www.stjohnkeystone.org), the KCRG website (www.kcrg.com), and KCRG television station (channel 9).

January, 2024

St. John Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 176—201 Fourth Avenue
Keystone, Iowa 52249
Church E-mail: stjnluth@netins.net
Rev. David Lingard, Vacancy Pastor
Pastor's Cell: 319-213-6970

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<i>New Year's Day</i> 1	2 1:00—4:00 p.m. Pastor Lingard at St. John	3 1:30 p.m. - Confirmation/ Midweek Classes 7:00 p.m. - Bible Study @ St. Andrew	4 9:00 - Noon— Pastor Lingard at St. John 9:00 a.m.— Doctrine Bible Study	5	<i>The Epiphany of Our Lord</i> 6
9:15 a.m. - Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Divine Service w/ Installation of CC 7	8	9 a.m. - 2 p.m. - Sewing for World Relief 1:00—4:00 p.m. - Pastor at St. John 2:00 p.m. - Communion at KNCC 9	10 1:30 p.m. Midweek Classes @ St. John only, No Confirmation No Bible Study @ St. Andrew	11 No Doctrine Bible Study	12	9 a.m.-Noon—13 Swaddling Clothes Shopping Day
8:30 - CC Meeting 14 9:15 - Sunday School 10:30 - Worship 11:30 - Quarterly Voters' Meeting	15 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Swaddling Clothes Shopping Day	16 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. - Sewing for World Relief	17 1:30 p.m. Midweek Classes @ St. John only, No Confirmation No Bible Study @ St. Andrew	18 No Doctrine Bible Study	19	20
9:15 a.m. - Sunday School 10:30 - Divine Service 21	22	9 a.m. - 2 p.m. 23 Sewing for World Relief 1:00—4:00 p.m. Pastor Lingard at St. John	24 1:30 p.m. - Confirmation/ Midweek Classes 7:00 p.m. - Bible Study @ St. Andrew	25 9:00 - Noon— Pastor Lingard at St. John 9:00 a.m.— Doctrine Bible Study	26	27
9:15 a.m. - Sunday 28 School 10:30 - Divine Service	29	9 a.m. - 2 p.m. 30 Sewing for World Relief 1:00—4:00 p.m. Pastor Lingard at St. John	31 1:30 p.m. - Confirmation/ Midweek Classes 7:00 p.m. - Bible Study @ St. Andrew			

Birthdays

January 2 - Austin Teneyck
 3 - Rick Andresen, Korbyn Metz, Boyd Oehlerich
 5 - Raegan Junge
 6 - Cathy Graf
 7 - Alexis Lyne, Mason Vargason
 8 - Howard Pohlmann, John Sindt
 10 - Richie Loy
 11 - Mary Pohlman
 12 - Brynnlee Seeck
 13 - Eleanor Roquet
 14 - Darold Sindt
 15 - Teri Geiger, Grace Wiese, Rick Wild
 16 - Leah Clemann, Tiffany Jackson, Betsie Niebes
 17 - Adam Albertsen, Mike Seeck
 19 - Nikki Steffen
 20 - Wayne Ritscher
 22 - Jonathan Meyer

Birthdays (continued)

January 25 - Matthew Brunssen, Tinley Jones, Scott Schroeder
 27 - Connie Baumgard, Calvin Franzenburg, Kassie Mather
 31 - Kathy Ebert

Wedding Anniversaries

January 2 - Don and Relda Pickering
 21 - Howard and Janyce Pohlmann
 22 - Rick and Dorothy Wild
 28 - Jordan and Kim Silhanek

