



Established 1900

ST. JOHNS MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

208 E. Washington St.
Farmersburg, Iowa 52047
PHONE: 563-536-2800
E-MAIL: stjohn87@neitel.net

307 Church Street
Luana, Iowa 52156
PHONE: 563-539-2321
stjohnluana@neitel.net



Established 1893

Pastor Jeremy Wolfe
pastorjeremywolfe@gmail.com
563-258-2936

VOLUME 1 JANUARY 2025 ISSUE 74

Last month, I used this space to promote the Christmas Meal. This month, I'm excited to share something just as meaningful! On **January 15th**, at St. John Luana, we are launching a new afterschool program called **P.E.E.P.S.** The name comes from the slang term for "people," but we've turned it into a faith filled acronym with a clear mission.

P.E.E.P.S. Stands For:

- **Play:** From **3 PM to 4 PM**, kids will have time to unwind from their school day. They can play, relax, or even work on their homework in a safe and welcoming environment. Kids arrive from busses at different times so we know kids will arrive sometime in this hour.
- **Educate:** From **4:00 PM to 5:00 PM**, we'll hold a class focused on learning about Christ, the Bible, and God's love for every child. These lessons are designed to be fun, engaging, and meaningful, helping kids grow in their faith.
- **Eat:** From **5:00 PM to 5:30 PM**, a simple meal will be served, not just for the kids but for their parents and the wider community. It's an opportunity to gather around the table and enjoy fellowship together.
- **Praise:** From **5:30 PM to 6:00 PM**, we'll conclude the day with a short worship service featuring upbeat songs, a brief sermon, and a meaningful liturgy.
- **Share:** Throughout the program, we'll share in Christ's love by building a supportive and caring community for kids, families, and volunteers.

We're incredibly grateful to have received an **ELCA Hunger Grant** and a generous private donation to make this program possible. However, **P.E.E.P.S. is an experiment.** We don't know what the response will be, and we need your help to make it successful. We plan to "test drive" this program until the end of the school year, after which we'll evaluate its impact and consider how to move forward.

How Can You Get Involved?

1. **Be present.** We need adult presence for this program to thrive. You don't need to teach or lead a class—just being there to assist, encourage, and provide support makes all the difference. If it's just me or one other person, it becomes hard to manage everything effectively.
2. **Join us for the meal or worship service.** If you're looking for a mid-week faith "booster," come enjoy the meal and stay for the worship service. Both are open to the entire community!
3. **Volunteer to teach or lead.** If you love working with kids or teaching Sunday School-style lessons, let me know. Your gifts could make a significant impact on this ministry.

This program reflects the words of Jesus in **Matthew 19:14**:

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

Through **P.E.E.P.S.**, we hope to create a space where children can experience Christ's love firsthand—through play, learning, fellowship, and worship. With your help, we can build something truly special that blesses both kids and the community.

Let me know if you have any questions or feel called to participate. Thank you for your support, and may God bless this new ministry as we begin the new year together!

Blessings, **Pastor Jeremy**

FARMERSBURG

CHURCH COUNCIL

Pres: Bill Scherf III. (25)
V. Pres: Bruce Glawe (25)
Sec: Loretta Weipert (26)
Treas: Ryan Moon (24)
Council Members: Ken Erickson (24),
 Dave Hageman (25) & Linda Schoulte (26)

CHURCH SECRETARY:

Kelly Shaw

FINANCIAL SECRETARY:

Kelly Shaw

OUTSIDE JANITOR:

Loren Scherf

INSIDE JANITOR:

Mary Beth Tielbar

WELCA:

Pres: Shirley Marmann
V. Pres: Velma Kuehl
Sec: Nancy Moon
Treas: Becky Fuelling
Mission Action: Bev Moon,
 Nancy Moon, Marlene Glawe

MEN'S GROUP:

Pres: Jason Klinge
V. Pres: Brad Hoth
Sec/Treas: Don Bossard

ALTAR GUILD:

Directress: Cheryl Bossard
Sec: Loretta Weipert
Treas: Velma Kuehl

ST. JOHN MINISTRY TEAM

Chairperson: Tammy Muller (24)
Secretary: Vicki Baade (24)
Members: Janelle Smith (25)
 Becky Fuelling (25)
 Aaron Smith (26)
 Linda Schoulte (26)

NEWSLETTER EDITORS;

Cheryl Bossard & Tammy Muller

Church Website:

<http://www.stjohn-farmersburg.org>

Remember to like St. John Facebook Page.

St. John will be celebrating 125 years as a congregation in 2025.

If you are interested in being a part of the planning committee for the celebration, please join us on Sunday, **January 19** after worship services .

Church Anniversary

ANNUAL MEETING

St. John Farmersburg Annual Meeting is planned for **February 2**

following worship. Please put this on your calendar and plan to attend.

January 12 Baptism of our Lord. It is a fitting time to remember our baptism and the baptism of all Christians.

Baptism declares that you are a follower of Jesus Christ and a member of God's family. During worship services we will be honoring our brothers and sisters in Christ who were baptized in 2024.

There will be a candle for a family member to light.

March 17, 2024, Kayden Loren Radloff son of Derek & Tonya
 May 19, 2024, Lawson James Radloff son of Zach & Autumn
 July 7, 2024, Oliver Jacob Nehl son of Jacob & Sara Meisner-Nehl
 October 20, 2024, Mateo William Moran son of Alex and Alli
 November 25, 2024, Isabella Grace Dubberke daughter of Jason and Christina (Klinge) Dubberke



Known January Baptisms

- 1 - Vivien Lone Scherf
- 4 - Dallas Tielbar
- 18 - Diane Kluth
- 27 - Hudson Robert Radloff
- 30 - Joel Moran



Our Sympathy to the family and friends of Robert John Pate who passed away on November 30th. His funeral service was December 10th at St. John Farmersburg. Thanks for sharing flowers.

Isabella Grace Dubberke, infant daughter of Jason and Christina (Klinge) Dubberke passed away on November 27th. Her funeral service was December 14th at St. John Farmersburg. Thank you for sharing flowers.

FARMERSBURG NEWS

ANNUAL REPORTS DUE

THANK YOU to everyone who has cooperated each year in getting these reports ready for the Annual meeting. The following is a list of committees and groups that were active this past year and from whom we would like to receive a report. Any other committee or group that would like to submit a report and inform us of 2024 happenings, please feel free to turn in a written report. All reports can be emailed to the church office (stjohn87@neitel.net) or given to Kelly Shaw.

DEADLINE FOR THE REPORTS IS JANUARY 12, 2025

Pastor's Report	Jeremy Wolfe
President's Report	Bill Scherf III.
Treasurer's Report	Kelly Shaw/Ryan Moon
Auditing Committee	Nancy Moon/Becky Fuelling/Michelle Scherf
Nominating Committee	Ken Erickson, Ryan Moon, John Klinge, Jeremy & Mellisa Wolfe & Ethel Lenth
Budget Committee	Bill Scherf III./Bruce Glawe/Ryan Moon/Loretta Weipert/ Dan Moon
Congregational Statistical Report	Kelly Shaw/Jeremy Wolfe
Stewardship Committee	Ryan Moon
Evangelism Committee/Caring Spirits	Bruce Glawe
Worship Committee	Ryan Moon
Property Committee	Ken Erickson
Memorial Committee	Tracey Phillips/Lindelle Scherf/Linda Schoulte
Parish Education Committee	Loretta Weipert
St. John Ministry Team	Linda Schoulte/Tammy Muller/Becky Fuelling
Women of the ELCA	Shirley Marmann/Becky Fuelling
Men of St. John	Jason Klinge/Don Bossard
Altar Guild	Cheryl Bossard/Velma Kuehl
Fascher Scholarship Fund	Tammy Muller/Kelly Shaw
Probert Scholarship Committee	Tammy Muller/Kelly Shaw
Schoenfeldt Scholarship	Tammy Muller/Kelly Shaw
Banner Committee	Marlene Glawe
Strawberry Point Lutheran Home	Clark Wikner/Deb Tidwell
EWALU Ambassadors	Shirley Marmann/Ethel Lenth
Interchurch Council	Linda Schoulte/Linda Friedlein/Lindelle Scherf
Prayer Shawl Project	Marlene Glawe
Shepherd of the Hills	Heather Hageman
Clayton County Food Shelf	Utonia Ruff

Chapter 9 Bylaws

B9.01 All committees and organizations handling funds within the congregation shall include as a part of their annual report to the congregation a financial report in writing which shall be included in the congregation's written annual report.

FARMERSBURG NEWS

USHERS

January 5 & January 12
 Captain Derek Radloff Rod Stagman
 Gilbert Brainard Ken Erickson

January 19 & January 26
 Captain Lyn Tielbar Brian Glawe
 Jamie Tielbar Sheldon Stotmeister

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

January 5 Bill Scherf III.
 January 19 Linda Schoulte

ALTAR GUILD

Loretta Weipert
 Meeting: January 11 (Note date)

GREETERS 2025

January
 5 Shirley Marmann & Tracey Phillips
 12 Steve & Lisa Pavlovec
 19 Kelly, Ashley & Autumn Shaw
 26 Kenny & Velma Kuehl

ACOLYTES

January 8 Carsen Kirby
 12 Connor Kirby
 19 Brayden Hoth
 26 Carsen Kirby

2025 WELCA CALENDAR

January 2025

6, 7, 8 Do-Days Every one is welcome to come and help. We work from 9 AM to 3 PM or as long as you can or want to.

15 9:30 am Meeting of officers/group leaders to plan 2025—2026 yearbook

Highlights of December 4th meeting.

We made 120 quilts this year. 14 were donated to the County Home, 24 were sent to LWR, 1 for graduation, 1 donated to EWALU quilt auction (was sold for \$375), 2 donated to SOTH, 42 were purchased, 39 donated to SOTH Christmas for Kids. Some were from other years.

Two white folding tables have been purchased in memory of Shirley Henkes. These tables will be used for funeral displays at the church.

We donated to our policy obligations.

Donation was made to the Food Shelf from our offering.

After our meeting we held our Christmas Party with 10 ladies attending. We played Christmas BINGO and enjoyed many delicious treats.

We also had many fun BINGO prizes to choose from!

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE

Cheryl & Don Bossard



January 1 Emily Peterson
 Heith Kessler
 Samantha (Howard) Kirby
 6 Jeff Klinge
 7 Katie (Feldmann) Vaske
 8 Chad Hoth
 11 Hudson Robert Radloff
 13 Tammy Muller
 14 Scott Henkes
 15 Lisa (Tielbar) Geick
 Tracey Phillips
 16 Diana Miller
 22 Valerie Kurth
 Scarlett Joy Scherf
 Skylar Kessler
 25 Cody Radloff
 Tait Wilker
 27 Brenda Hoth
 Makenzie Corlett
 28 Maycale Trumblee
 29 Heather Hageman
 30 Jason Klinge
 Andy Suhr
 31 Brian Glawe
 Bruce Glawe

Thank You For Sharing Poinsettias

The White Poinsettias are in memory of Ruth and Stanton Klinge and in memory of Olga and James Tidwell given by Jeff Klinge & Deb Tidwell.

In memory of Brad Wikner & Loved Ones given by Clark & Kris Wikner & family

In memory of Larry, Dale & Isabel Kurth & Loved Ones given by Julie Kurth & family

In memory of Brad Lenth & Loved Ones given by Ethel Lenth

In memory of Sonya Stagman & Loved Ones given by Rod Stagman

In memory of Cheryl Howard, Mary Tielbar & Loved Ones given by Ken & Heather Crogan & family

In memory of Loved Ones given by Barney & Lindelle Scherf

In memory of Brook Scherf & Loved Ones given by Bill & Michelle Scherf III. & family

In memory of Verdine Glawe & Loved Ones given by Marlene Glawe

In memory of Don Marmann & Loved Ones given by Shirley Marmann

In memory of Loved Ones given by Kenny & Velma Kuehl

Merry Christmas given by Don & Cheryl Bossard

The wreaths on the church doors are given in memory of

Sonya Stagman and Loved Ones from Rod Stagman and

In memory of John & Dorothy Bossard, Arlyn & MaryAnn Gray from Don & Cheryl Bossard & family



FARMERSBURG NEWS

ST JOHN CHURCH COUNCIL

December 8, 2024

Present: Bill Scherf, Linda Schoulte, Loretta Weipert, Ken Erickson, Ryan Moon, Bruce Glawe and Jeremy Wolfe. Absent: Dave Hageman. Prior to the meeting we assisted in putting up the Christmas tree and Nativity Set.

Meeting called to order by President Bill at 12:05. Opening devotions given by Jeremy Wolfe. Changes to the agenda were to add details of Nominating and Budget Committee and remove VBS. Ken moved to approve the amended agenda; Linda seconded. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the minutes of November 10, 2024 secretary minutes made by Bruce, seconded by Ken. Motion carried.

Linda moved to approve the treasurer report, second by Loretta. Motion carried.

Pastor's report: Talked about Christmas Meal. Planning meeting after church next Sunday. Looking for volunteers and desserts. Also talked about the Children's program starting Wed January 15 after school (around 3 pm) at Luana Church.

Old Business: Christmas Meal- discussed in Pastor's report.

New Business: Nominating Committee- Meeting scheduled for December 29 after church. Committee is Ryan, Ken, Jeremy, Melissa Wolfe, Ethel Lenth and John Klinge. Need to find council members to replace Ryan and Ken.

Budget Committee- Meeting planned for January 8th at 1 pm. Committee is Bill, Bruce, Ryan, Loretta and Dan Moon.

Committee Reports:

Evangelism- No Report

Parish Ed- Christmas Program December 15 during worship. No Sunday School December 22 & 29.

Property- Brad will do snow removal. The door near the upstairs bathroom needs to be oiled. School house bill will be taken care of by a generous donor.

Stewardship- No report.

Worship- Christmas Eve Program in Farmersburg at 8:30 pm.

Memorial- No report. Men's Group- No report.

Women's Group- No report.

Motion to adjourn by Ryan, second by Bruce. Motion carried.

Submitted by Loretta Weipert, secretary



FARMERSBURG NEWS



January 26
Gilbert & Barb Brainard



Thank you to the good people of St. John's for another year of remembering me with the newsletter, Sunshine committee, devotional booklet cards and letters. I am still in Samaritan Bethany but in a different area. For those that don't have my new address it is 24 8th Street NW Rochester MN 55901 May you all have a blessed 2025.

Dorothy Kluth

November, 2024 – Treasurer's Report Income:

1937.03	CD Interest
430.00	
786.00	
1793.00	
1048.00	
354.00	(PayPal Offering)

Missions:

NE Iowa Synod:	270.00
SOTH:	232.00
Food Shelf:	122.00
St. Pt. Home:	35.00
LSI:	50.00
EWALU:	35.00

Staff Compensation:

Pastor:	2546.37 + 519.21 + 361.63 (Portico) (Housing from different Account: 681.17)
Inside Cust.:	215.48
Outside Cust.:	126.98
Organists:	129.28

Expenses:

Black Hills (gas):	40.30
Alliant (elec):	208.39
NEIT:	116.25
Church Mutual	597.57
USPS	660.00
City of Farmersburg	265.45

Total Income: 6348.03

Total Expenses: 6530.91

General Checking Balance – November 1, 2024: 5263.24

November 30, 2024: 5080.36

Kelly Shaw, Treasurer

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

NOVEMBER

3- 39

10- 27

17- 29

24- 21



LUANA NEWS

LUANA

CHURCH SECRETARY & FINANCIAL TREAS.:

Karla Schrader

CHURCH COUNCIL:

President: Neil Landt (24)

V. Pres: Aaron Smith (25)

Sec: Mel Lenth (24)

Cur. Treas: Diane Kraus (25)

Bene. Treas: Sherri Johnson (24)

Financial Counters: Council

DEACONS:

Neil Landt (24)

Jerry Schroeder (26)

Tim Donlon (26)

TRUSTEES:

Sherri Johnson (24)

Mel Lenth (24)

Diane Kraus (25)

Aaron Smith (25)

Heath Landt (26)

WELCA:

Leaders:

January—March Karla Schrader

April—June Mel Lenth

July—September Lisa Meyer

Oct.—December Vicky Baade

ALTAR GUILD:

Pres: Sherri Johnson (26)

Sec: Darci Engelhardt (26)

Banners/Linens/Candles:

Mary Schroeder (24)

Lisa Meyer (25)

Special Services/Flowers:

Betty Handke (24)

Diane Kraus (25)

Bapt./Comm.:

Sherri Johnson

Darci Engelhardt

Seasonal Banners:

Altar Guild

ST. JOHN MINISTRY TEAM

Chairperson: Tammy Muller(24)

Secretary: Vicki Baade (24)

Members: Janelle Smith (25)

Becky Fuelling (25)

Aaron Smith (26)

Linda Schoulte (26)

St. John's Luana website

www.stjohn-luana.org

JANUARY VOLUNTEERS

Greeters: Loren and Mel Lenth

Read Lessons & Prayers: Jan. 5 - Linda Davis
Jan. 12 - Mary Schroeder
Jan. 19 - Neal Wikner
Jan. 26 - Mel Lenth

Acolyte: Jan. 5 - Dayne Anderson
Jan. 12 - Karsten Steege
Jan. 19 - Emme Wikner
Jan. 26 - Josh Schierholz

Communion Servers: Jan. 5 - Jerry Schroeder and Sherri Johnson
Jan. 19 - Neil Landt and Mel Lenth

Altar Guild: Darci Engelhardt

Flowers: Cindy Landt



	<p>Annual Meeting is January 19th after services.</p>
---	--

Poinsettia's in memory of loved ones....



Lonnie & Vicky Baade in Memory of Loved Ones.
Diane Kraus in Memory of Loved Ones.
Loren & Mel Lenth in Memory of Loved Ones
Jim & Lisa Meyer in Memory of Loved Ones
Doug & Connie Schlein in Memory of Loved Ones
Doug & Karla Schrader in Memory of Loved Ones

<p>HAPPY BIRTHDAY January 1 - Lisa Meyer 8 - Brynleigh McHaney 13 - Julie Mohs 15 - Darci Engelhardt 19 - Jeanne Miller 21 - Adam Smith 22 - Loren Lenth Stephanie Steele 27 - Erma Swenson 28 - Linda Davis 29 - Amber Moeller</p>	
--	--



JANUARY

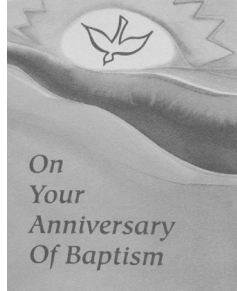
20 - Duaine & Linda Davis
31 - Dwain & Jean Wolter

LUANA NEWS

KNOWN BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

January

- 10 – Megan Koehn
 Kimberly Kraus
- 13– Paul Miller
- 15 – Burke Schrader
- 27 – Holley Smith
- 28 - Lisa Meyer
- 29 – Carol Goettler
- 31 – Adam Smith



WITH DEEPEST
Sympathy

Our Sympathy goes out to the family of David Engelhardt. His funeral at St. John, Luana was held on Saturday, December 14th.

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

	Att.	Comm	
Nov. 24	45		
Dec. 1	65	47	
Dec. 8	32		
Dec. 15	<u>No Church</u>		
	142	47	



St. John Council Minutes December 8, 2024

Meeting called to order by President Neil Landt @ 7:31am

Present: Neil Landt, Pastor Jeremy, Diane Kraus, Melanie Lenth, Jerry Schroeder, Stan Dull, Tim Donlon and Heath Landt. Absent-Sherri Johnson and Aaron Smith.

Devotions led by Pastor reflecting on joy.

Minutes from October and November were read by Melanie. Motion by Stan and seconded by Diane to accept the minutes. Motion carried.

Financial Report: Parsonage rent from November and December was questionable. Jerry motioned to approve the report and Tim second it. Motion carried.

Old Business: The Church sign and dimensions 4' x 3' to be completed and hung outside of the front of the building by the Mother's room window. Melanie will contact Schultz Sign Company to proceed. Building Committee to install the sign.

The cost of the Church insurance was discussed and a motion made by Jerry and seconded by Stan to pay 1 month of insurance premium at the cost of \$940.14. Motion carried. The Church insurance will be discussed at the Annual Meeting in January. In the meantime, Pastor will check into other insurance companies.

Baptismal font was not discussed, and neither was the piano tuning.

New Business: The proposed 2025 budget was reviewed and analyzed. Increases to be determined at the 2025 Annual Meeting are:

Pastor and Secretary/Treasurer wages, the Church/Parsonage Insurance, Worship and Administration expenses. Also, a discussion will be held on the selling the parsonage. \$500.00 year-end bonuses each for the Pastor, secretary/treasurer and custodian were approved.

Heath made the motion to approve the Proposed 2025 Budget, 2nd by Tim and motion carried. Annual Meeting-January 19, 2025.

Pastor announced he will try to talk to as many people as he can in Luana to encourage them to attend church and the Christmas meal.

Next Meeting: January 19, 2025, after the Annual Meeting.

Meeting concluded with the Lord's Prayer at 8:26am.

Respectively submitted by Melanie Lenth, council secretary

November REPORT

EXPENSES

Black Hills Utilities –Nat. Gas	37.75
Alliant - Electricity	228.37
Karla Schrader –Secretary	500.22
Cindy Landt – Custodian	461.50
NEITEL	119.53
Jeremy Wolfe- salary	2,546.37
Jeremy Wolfe - Oct. mil & supp.	503.84
Jeremy Wolfe – housing	681.17
IRS	79.93
Luana Post Office	4.85
Silver Birch – Baptismal suppl	48.37
Plunketts – ext.	57.25
Sam’s – Christmas dinner	305.35
Jeremy Wolfe – convention	<u>51.38</u>
	5,625.88

INCOME

Nov. 3	2,549.37
Nov. 10	593.00
Nov. 17	744.00
Nov. 25	<u>827.00</u>
	4,713.37
Fmbg Portico	777.99
from Repair Fund	<u>1,900.00</u>
	7,391.36
Bal. Oct. 31, 2024	(1,426.93)
Income	<u>7,391.36</u>
	5,964.43
Less Expense	<u>5,625.88</u>
Bal. Nov. 30, 2024	338.55

SPECIAL FUNDS

St John Scholarship Fund CD	40,895.06
Ruby Breitsprecher CD	5,500.44
Willard & Anne Kamin CD	4,499.38

RENT/REPAIR FUND

Bal. 10-31-24	\$29,400.26
To Current	<u>1,900.00</u>
Bal. 11-30-24	\$27,500.26

CURRENT FUND

	Envelopes	Plate	Total
Nov. 3	2,502.37	47.00	2,549.37
Nov. 10	457.00	136.00	593.00
Nov. 17	697.00	47.00	744.00
Nov. 24	<u>807.00</u>	<u>20.00</u>	<u>827.00</u>
	4,463.37	250.00	4,713.37

THRIVENT BALANCE

Bal. Nov 30, 2024	311,025.50
-------------------	------------

BENEVOLENCE REPORT

INCOME

Nov. 3	Offering	190 .00
	Operating	50.00
	Food Shelf	50.00
	Xmas 4 Kids	175.00
Nov. 10	Offering	15.00
	Food Shelf	10.00
Nov. 17	Offering	34.00
	Food Shelf	10.00
	Operating	50.00
Nov. 24	Offering	10.00
	Food Shelf	10.00
	Operating	50.00
	Xmas 4 Kids	<u>100.00</u>
		754.00

EXPENSES

SOTH	130.00
Operating	150.00
Xmas 4 Kids	275.00
Food Shelf	80.00
Synod	<u>119.00</u>
	754.00



Both Churches News

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: Sue Grotegut, Stacy DeSotel, Carolyn Middendorf, Tom Meuleman, Kent Seitz, Linda Hughes, Larry Doerring, Missy Adams, Julie Mohs, Ryne Landt, Charlie Post, Lonnie Baade, Joy David, Rick Conley, Harper Armstrong, *Dallas Tielbar, Shelby Preston, Bram Byroade, Melody Pate, Jim Fuelling, Mike Reardon, Ron Tayek, Cheryl Bossard, Beth Bries, John Klinge*

MILITARY: Avrey Smith, *Andrew Rodas & Beth Rodas*

ELKADER CARE CENTER: Grace Doerring

GARDEN VIEW PLACE: Juanita Mohs, Darlene Moon

GUTTENBERG CARE CENTER: Harold & Jeanette Vogt

TOWER LIVING CENTER: *Lendall Schievelbein*

SAMARITAN BETHANY ROCHESTER, MN 55901: *Dorothy Kluth*

KENSINGTON ASSISTED LIVING: Mary Russett

WAUKON GOOD SAMARITAN CENTER: *Rita Pritchard*

HOMEBOUND: *Glenda Henkes, Lee Klinkenberg, Jeanette Krambeer, Jim Fuelling, Shirley Wagner*



The new year brings new beginnings. At LSI, we walk alongside Iowans for all sorts of beginnings. We walk alongside parents-to-be as they prepare for the birth of their child. We welcome immigrants and refugees as they begin their new lives in Iowa. We train parents looking to adopt a child and create a new beginning for their family.

This January, we offer Thomas's story of his new beginning.

In 1996, Congolese civil war broke out in the present-day countries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Republic of the Congo, forcing then two-year-old Thomas Mbuthu into exile in a refugee camp in neighboring Zambia. After growing up in a refugee camp, now 27-year-old Thomas applied to come to the United States.

When Thomas landed at the Des Moines airport in an entirely foreign land in a state called Iowa, LSI caseworker Patrick Karemera greeted him.

"I said, 'Welcome! This is your new home now! I am your brother. This is a new life. Feel free and feel safe,'" shared Patrick, recounting his initial meeting with his client Thomas.

Thomas thanked him, explaining he had not expected to see someone like Patrick welcome him – someone who looked like himself and spoke his native languages of Lingala and Swahili.

"As a refugee, I wanted a better life. But I didn't know where I was going. 'What is going to happen to me?'" wondered Thomas aloud.

"When Patrick came to me, I could see the future."

Patrick is from the same country as Thomas, coming to America just a few years prior. He works as a caseworker to welcome refugees to Iowa and helps them resettle, pursue their goals, and navigate the challenges of an entirely foreign place.

"I immigrated here, like Thomas. It's rewarding to welcome somebody like me to come here to Iowa. This is my second home," said Patrick.

Patrick admires how courageous, open-minded, and curious Thomas is. He encourages his client to dream big and work hard to achieve his goals.

"Life is about helping each other," shared Patrick.

For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Shepherd of the Hills Ministries

NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2025



And that is a “wrap”! Christmas for Kids is now completed, Thank you does not seem to cover the outpouring of support we received for this project. The donations are greatly appreciated. The quilts were beautiful, the books were a great assortment and let’s just say... I may have tested some of the pretty cool toys! I can only imagine how the kids will feel opening up these gifts for Christmas. All of you should feel a little joy knowing you were a big part of a brighter Christmas for these families!

Clothing Center Updates:

We will not be accepting any Christmas items until next year. Winter items will only be accepted from now until March. We appreciate a scheduled day for your donations to maintain the flow and schedule volunteers accordingly. Just a side note... My mom has decided to take a small step back from volunteering so if you are interested in volunteering, please call the office.

Shepherd Conference News:

Congratulations to Pastor Michael Ashman (St. Paul Lutheran and St. John Lutheran- both in Guttenberg) on the anniversary of his ordination on January 3, 1993.

I will be working on the Conference Assembly paperwork. If you are wanting to serve on the SOTH board, we will have openings for secretary (2 yr term) property (2 yr term) and the Synod Representative (3 yr term). If you have an interest in joining the board, please let me know by January 3rd, 2025.

The **Operating Fund** pays the utilities, insurance on the building, supplies, salaries and Lawn/Snow Care.

The **Crisis Fund** is used to help families with emergency rent or utilities and our sponsored events throughout the year

Please utilize the **MEMO LINE** on your check to specify Crisis or Operating Fund!

Please indicate what church you are from as well to provide better bookkeeping.

IMPORTANT EVENTS/DATES:

**Conference Assembly
February 16th @ 2pm
(snow date of Feb. 23)
St. Paul, Volga**

*Any event may be subject to change

Shepherd of the Hills:

Heather Hageman
100 W. Hill Street, PO Box 36,
St. Olaf, IA 52072

Telephone: 563-783-2409

Fax: 563-783-2428

E-mail: shephill@netel.net

Business Hours: Monday-Friday

