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## Finding Hope this Christmas Season

The Christmas season often arrives with sparkling lights, joyful music, presents under the tree, and the promise of togetherness. For many, it's a time of celebration and cherished traditions. Yet, we also recognize that some in our church and wider community experience a "Blue Christmas," marked by sadness due to loss or illness. If you're struggling this time of year, you're not alone—your feelings are valid and important.

Christmas has a way of magnifying both joy and pain. When we're hurting, reminders of happier times or the absence of loved ones can make the season feel heavy. Loss, illness, broken relationships, or financial hardship can cast long shadows over "the most wonderful time of the year." It may seem as if others are celebrating while you're just trying to get through each day.

In our church, we understand that the holidays can be complicated. Many of us are grieving loved ones who won't be at the table or facing illnesses that make daily life challenging. It's okay to acknowledge these struggles; the good news of Christmas isn't only for those who feel joyful. Rejoicing at Christmas doesn't mean pretending everything is fine. It means trusting God's promise that we are never alone. We can celebrate Jesus' birth even as we mourn, because He brings redemption, healing, and peace.

Our faith in Jesus assures us that God draws near in our pain. Christ's birth was not into a world of comfort, but into one of hardship and need. Jesus came as Emmanuel, "God with us," to walk alongside us in every season, especially the difficult ones. Even when our hearts are heavy, God's light is present. Because of Jesus, we can find hope and comfort amid sorrow. We are invited to bring our grief, worries, and questions to Him, knowing He cares deeply for us.

Within our church family, we support each other by sharing stories, praying, and creating space for honest conversation. If this season feels blue for you, join us in honest worship and fellowship, finding strength in community and the presence of God. This Christmas, know that your struggles matter to God. May you experience the comfort of His love and the hope that comes from faith in Jesus. Even amid illness, loss, and grief, we have reason to rejoice: Christ is born, and His light shines in our darkest moments. You are not alone, and your church family is here to walk with you through every season. Amen.

Pastor Todd

## *St. John Lutheran Church*

**8:30 a.m. Worship Service**

**Pastor Todd Burrichter**

**Deacon Jackie Schilling**

**300 Merrill Street**

**P.O. Box 575**

**Nashua, IA 50658**

**641-435-2396**

[stjohnlutherannashua@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnlutherannashua@gmail.com)

[stjohnnashua.org](http://stjohnnashua.org)

### **Church Leadership**

**President: Kathy Cerwinski**

**Vice President: Zach Huffman**

**Secretary: Lisa Acton**

**Congregational  
Life &  
Ministry: Megan Stille,  
Kif Richmann,  
Lisa Acton**

**Building &  
Grounds: Jeremy Wolf**

**Technology: Zach Huffman**

**Worship & Music: Rick Drewelow**

### **Additional Church Leaders**

**Finance: Mark Rodruck**

**Treasurer: Jo Henn**

**Agape: Ann Senner**

**Jubilee: Bruce Bruns**

**Custodians: Rod & Beth Wilson**



### **October 2025 General Fund Report**

Balance 10/01/2025	(\$40,794.30)
Receipts	\$10,824.46
Expenses	\$19975.02
Transfers	(\$370.00)
Balance 09/30/2025	(\$50,314.86)

### **November 2025**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Giving</b>
Nov 2	79	\$12,808.00
Nov 9	82	\$1,596.63
Nov 16	96	\$2,869.90
Nov 23	110	\$1,922.00
Nov 30	-	-
Giving to Date		\$ 19,196.53
Vanco Simply Giving		\$
Total Nov. Giving		\$

### **2025 Christmas Shoebox Campaign**

We were able to pack, check, and deliver 55 shoeboxes by November 23rd, to the **Evangelical Free Church** in Charles City.

Thank you to everyone who help in the many facets of this project, those who purchased, packed, checked, labeled, and paid for postage.

We couldn't have done it without you.

Many children will have a smile and discover the love of God, through this program!



	December 7th Trad / Comm <b>2nd Sunday Advent</b>	December 14th Jubilee / Comm <b>3rd Sunday Advent</b>	December 21st Traditional <b>4th Sunday Advent</b>	Dec. 24th Christmas Eve <b>Children's Program</b>	Dec. 24 Trad Comm Candle <b>Christmas Eve</b>	December 28th Traditional <b>1st Sun of Christmas</b>
Head Usher	Rick Drewelow	Rick Drewelow	Rick Drewelow		Kif	Rick Drewelow
ADVENT	Kathy / Peace It is Well	Sarah / Joy Joy to the World	Kristy / Love Away in a Manger Be Thou My Vision	N/A	Christopher / Holy O Holy Night	N/A
Lector	Jill Kalvig	Myrna Ross	Joy Krieger	Needed	Needed	Beth Wilson
Sound	Kif Richman	Jeff Trost	Lisa Acton	Needed	Kaden Hannemann	Wyatt Burrichter
Video	Carter Hennick	Karelyn Wolf	Lyla Burrichter	Needed	Kami Hannemann	Needed
Greeter/Offering	The Miller Family (& Noisy Offering)	The Wolf Family	The Burrichters	Needed	Angie Dietz and Sam Rogers	Ken & Cathy Haut
Communion	Needed	Needed	N/A	N/A	The Huffman Family	N/A

If you can't fill a position, please let me know in the office as soon as possible. 641-435-2396 or [stjohnlutherannashua@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnlutherannashua@gmail.com)

If you or someone you know might be in town and available during an empty space please let me know.

Worship servants are very harder to find during the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays, Please help when you can. thank you!

### Area December Music Concerts Coming Soon!

#### **Welcome the Christmas Season: With local live music performances.**

##### **Sunday, December 7th**

The **Charles City Singers** will perform their annual holiday concert on Sunday, December 7th at 2 p.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church in Charles City. Choral concert selections include Christmas standards like "Silent Night" along with seasonal holiday favorites like Silver Bells. Local vocalists singing with the group include Nashua-Plainfield music instructor Scott Stroud and Laurie Kristiansen, from St. John Lutheran Church in Nashua. Tickets are \$10 and available at the door. Students are free.

##### **Sunday, December 14th**

St. John Lutheran Church in Nashua will host the **Annual Christmas Community Concert** featuring local musicians from area churches and other community members. This concert has become a holiday tradition for Nashua and the surrounding community. A variety of Christmas favorites are on the program, with a promise for something for all music tastes! There is no admission charge, but concert-goers may contribute a free-will offering that will go to the local ministerium for outreach help. The event will be held at St. John Lutheran Church, 300 Merrill Street, Nashua. The concert begins at 3 p.m.



#### **December Birthdays**

5	Anita Sullivan	19	Taylor Haut
6	Melvin Folkerts	25	Adrienne Kalvig
6	Abigail Poppe	28	Julie Trost
8	Landyn Stiles	29	Harriet Pothast
10	Cindy Steere	29	Gary Lore
16	Jonathan O'Neill	29	Allyson Poppe

## Lutheran World Relief 2025

The women and men of the St John Lutheran Church served 28 days and many hours during 2025 and completed the following things for Lutheran World Relief:

Quilts – **546**

Personal Care Kits – **78**

School Kits – **40**

Baby Care Kits – **65**



**LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF**

We want to thank those who have donated money, material, thread and their time.

Thanks to the men for helping set up our tables and sewing machines, taping filled boxes that are ready to send, and helping with everything we ask of them!

Hats off to **Dennis Demro, Gary Olson, Bruce Becker and Matt Hannemann.**

A HUGE thank you to the women that pinned, sewed, and tied all the quilts. These women are great workers.

**MaryLee Mehmen, Kathy Cerwinske, Zelda Demro, Jeanne Olson Sue Garbes, Julie Trost, Ann Senner, Myrna Ross, Sherri Nieman, Linda Becker, Karen Schmidt, Marlene Tieskotter, Vicki Jones, Luci Fober, Lisa Acton, Joan Benning, Chris Seamans, and Nancy Hillesheim.**

Thanks to **Bruce and Linda Becker** for delivering our quilts and kits every time! Thanks to all who helped with our Mission Work over the years. This is one of the ways **St. John Lutheran Church “Loves as Jesus Loves.”**

**The Sewing and Quilting Committee**



**Our Love  
is Reaching  
Our  
Neighbors**

*After a bridge collapsed in Baltimore, your quilts and kits were delivered to seafarers trapped in the port.*



*Your compassion arrived immediately following an attack on a children's hospital in Ukraine.*

### **Feeding His Sheep in Nashua**

**Compass Center; Lunches; Every Tuesday**  
Free-Will Offering .....11:30-12:30 p.m.

### **Nashua Food Pantry:**

**Every Friday.....9-11 a.m. & on Call.**

### **Mobile Food Pantry:**

**December 18th.....4-5:30 p.m.**  
(Every 3rd Thursday)

### **Community Food Pantry** (Here at St. John)

Monday, Thursday.....9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Tuesday, Wednesday.....9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturday.....9 a.m. to Noon Closed Friday.

Other times by Appointment: Call 641-435-2396

## Daring Joy by Deacon Jackie

### Holding Sorrow and Praise: The Paradox of Faith

The holiday season is upon us. For many, this time of year brings images of warmth, family gatherings, and pure, unadulterated **joy**. But for many others, the holidays can sharpen the edges of **grief**, loneliness, and deep sorrow. Perhaps the hardest place to be is in the space where both realities exist—where you can be grieving a profound loss one moment and lifting your voice in praise the next.

This isn't a contradiction; it is the **paradox of true faith**.

### The Psalms: A Sanctuary for All Emotions

Our worship is honest because God's Word is honest. The Bible doesn't shy away from human suffering. In fact, many of the Psalms—the very hymnbook of ancient Israel—show us how to hold sorrow and worship at the very same time.

We see the Psalmist cry out in anguish, only to pivot to praise:

- **Sorrow and Pain:** “O Lord, why do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?” (Psalm 10:1)
- **The Pivot to Praise:** Yet, the same writer can proclaim, “I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.” (Psalm 9:1)

And in one of the most powerful examples of holding both, the prophet Habakkuk, facing the imminent destruction of his nation, declares:

“Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, **yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.**” (Habakkuk 3:17–18)

This is not a command to *fake* happiness. It is the spiritual strength to recognize that while our circumstances may be devastatingly painful, our **hope** in God remains unshakable. The praise isn't *for* the pain, but *in the midst* of it.

### The Hope of Christmas

As we light the Advent candles and sing carols, let us remember that the Christmas story itself is framed by this very paradox.

We sing of **joy to the world**, yet we are reminded that the world into which Jesus was born was filled with fear, poverty, and Roman oppression. This season doesn't ask us to ignore the sorrow, but rather to see that the birth of Christ is the reason we can sustain joy and hope *even when* sorrow is present.

### A Personal Note of Thanks

This year, this paradox has become intensely real for Ron and me.

We are navigating a season of profound sorrow, sadness, and pain as we deal with the progression of Ron's cancer, which has moved so quickly and with such overwhelming force. There are days when the grief threatens to consume every moment.

And yet, in the very next breath, we are filled with an overwhelming **joy** and **hopefulness**. This joy doesn't come from a denial of the reality we face, but from the incredible people God has placed in our lives—our **church family**. Your cards, your meals, your prayers, and your quiet presence are living, breathing examples of God's great love.

Thank you. Thank you for walking with us. Thank you for making space for our tears and, at the same time, giving us a reason to smile. You help us uphold the true meaning of this season.

We can experience all these complex emotions—the pain and the praise, the sorrow and the salvation—because of one great, eternal truth: **Emmanuel... God is with us.**

May you feel His presence, whether in your deepest pain or your highest praise, this Christmas season.

# Peace Love JOY Peace Love JOY

## Our Homebound Members

**Beth Waller:** Maquoketa

**June Marth:** West Des Moines

**Shirley Fosse:** Annie's Asst. Living, Tampa, FL

**Liz Arends:** Accura Healthcare, New Hampton

**Burton & Edna Dietz:** Clarksville Assisted Living Ctr.

**Don Niemeyer:** Clarksville Skilled Nursing & Rehab Ctr.

**Jeanette Schluter:** Clarksville Skilled Nursing & Rehab Ctr.

**Virginia Kraft:** Cedar Vale

**Verna Wiebke:** Linden Place, Bartels

**Ida Schloemer:** Evergreen Arbor, Bartels

**Stan Goddard:** 9th St. Chautauqua, Charles City

**Phyllis Kunzman:** 11th St. Chautauqua, Charles City

**Mary Lou Phyfe:** Clarksville Skilled Nursing & Rehab Ctr.

## Upcoming Events at St. John Lutheran, Nashua

**Monday, December 1st ..... Cub Scouts ..... 5:30 p.m.**

**Monday, December 1st ..... Dart Ball Practice ..... 6:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday, Nov. 3rd ..... Food, Family, Fun ..... 6:00 p.m.**

**Worship and Bible Study ..... 6:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday, December 3rd ..... Dart Ball Game ..... 7:00 p.m.**

**Saturday, Nov 6th ..... Men's Breakfast ..... 7:00 a.m.**

**Sun, November 7th ..... St John, Nashua, Traditional with Communion ..... 8:30 a.m.**

**..... Sunday School in the Pews ..... 10:30 a.m.**

**2nd Sunday of Advent St. Peter, Richfield; Traditional with communion ..... 10:30 a.m.**

**Monday, December 8th ..... Dart Ball Practice ..... 6:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday, Nov. 10th ..... Food, Family, Fun ..... 6:00 p.m.**

**Worship and Bible Study ..... 6:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday, December 10th ..... Dart Ball Game ..... 7:00 p.m.**

**Thursday, Nov. 11 ..... Book Club ..... 6:30 p.m.**

**Sun, November 14th ..... St John, Nashua, Traditional Service ..... 8:30 a.m.**

**..... Sunday School and Christmas Program Practice After Children's Message**

**3rd Sunday of Advent ..... St. John, Stapleton; Traditional Service ..... 10:30 a.m.**

**Monday, December 15th ..... Cub Scouts ..... 5:30 p.m.**

**Monday, December 15th ..... CHURCH COUNCIL ..... 6:00 p.m.**

**Monday, December 15th ..... Dart Ball Practice ..... 6:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday, Nov. 17th ..... Food, Family, Fun ..... 6:00 p.m.**

**Worship and Bible Study ..... 6:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday, December 17th ..... Dart Ball Game ..... 7:00 p.m.**

**Sun, November 21st ..... St John, Nashua, Traditional with Communion ..... 8:30 a.m.**

**..... Sunday School and Christmas Program Practice After Children's Message**

**4th Sunday of Advent St. Peter, Richfield; Traditional ..... 10:30 a.m.**

**Monday, December 22nd ..... Dart Ball Practice ..... 6:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday, November 24th ... St John, Nashua, Children's Christmas Program ..... 5:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday, November 24th ... Christmas Eve Candlelight Service ..... 7:00 p.m.**

**Christmas Eve St. John, Stapleton; Candlelight Service ..... 5 p.m. Led by Pastor Todd**

**Thursday, December 25 ..... CHRISTMAS DAY**

**Sun, November 28th ..... St John, Nashua, Jubilee Service ..... 8:30 a.m.**

**1st Sunday of Christmas St. John, Stapleton; Traditional Service ..... 10:30 a.m.**

**Monday, December 29th ..... Dart Ball Practice ..... 6:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday, December 31st ..... Dart Ball Game ..... 7:00 p.m.**

**Thursday, January 1st, 2026 ..... HAPPY NEW YEAR**

**Saturday, January 3rd, 2026 ..... Men's Breakfast ..... 7:00 a.m.**

# DECEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
<div>Pastor Todd Vacation</div> <div>Deacon Jackie Vacation</div> <div>First Sunday of Advent</div> <div>8:30am Traditional Service</div> <div>10:30am St John (Stapleton)</div>						
	<div>9am Lisa Work</div> <div>6:30pm Cub Scouts</div> <div>6:30pm Dart Ball Practice</div>		<div>5pm Food, Family Fun</div> <div>6:30pm Worship with Bible Study</div> <div>7pm Dart Ball Game</div>	<div>9am Lisa Work</div>	<div>9am Lisa Work</div>	<div>7am Men's Breakfast</div>
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<div>Pastor Todd Vacation</div> <div>2nd Sunday of Advent</div> <div>8:30am Traditional Communion Ser</div> <div>10:30am St. Peter (Richfield) Worshi</div>	<div>9am Lisa Work</div> <div>6:30pm Dart Ball Practice</div>		<div>5pm Food, Family Fun</div> <div>6:30pm Worship with Bible Study</div> <div>7pm Dart Ball Game</div>	<div>9am Lisa Work</div> <div>6:30pm Book Club</div>	<div>9am Lisa Work</div>	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<div>3rd Sunday of Advent</div> <div>Christmas Ecumenical Music Program</div> <div>8:30am Jubilee Communion Service</div> <div>10:30am St John (Stapleton)</div>	<div>9am Lisa Work</div> <div>6:30pm Cub Scouts</div> <div>6pm Council</div> <div>6:30pm Dart Ball Practice</div>		<div>5pm Food, Family Fun</div> <div>6:30pm Worship with Bible Study</div> <div>7pm Dart Ball Game</div>	<div>Mobile Food Pantry of Chickasaw Co.</div> <div>9am Lisa Work</div>	<div>9am Lisa Work</div>	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
<div>4th Sunday of Advent</div> <div>8:30am Traditional Service</div> <div>10:30am St. Peter (Richfield)</div>	<div>9am Lisa Work</div> <div>6:30pm Dart Ball Practice</div>	<div>9am Lisa Work</div>	<div>Christmas Eve</div> <div>5pm Stapleton Candlelight Service</div> <div>6:30pm Children's Program</div> <div>8pm Candlelight Service w/Commur</div>	<div>Christmas Day</div>	<div>9am Lisa Work</div>	
28	29	30	31	Jan 1	2	3
<div>1st Sunday of Christmas</div> <div>8:30am Jubilee Service</div> <div>10:30am St John (Stapleton)</div>	<div>9am Lisa Work</div> <div>6:30pm Dart Ball Practice</div>	<div>9am Lisa Work</div>	<div>New Year's Eve</div> <div>5pm Food, Family Fun</div> <div>5:30pm Worship with Bible Study</div> <div>7pm Dart Ball Game</div>	<div>New Year's Day</div>	<div>9am Lisa Work</div>	<div>7am Men's Breakfast</div>

St. John Lutheran Church  
P.O. Box 575  
300 Merrill Street  
Nashua, IA 50658

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN

**Nashua  
Community  
Christmas  
Program**



**Sunday,  
Dec. 14th  
3:00 p.m.**  
**St. John  
Lutheran  
Church  
Nashua**