

The August 2025 Epistle

A publication of St. James Lutheran Church,
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MESSAGE from the MINISTER

*Every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the
Father of Lights in whom there is no variation or shifting
shadows.*

James 1:17

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ!

In the 11th chapter of Luke's gospel, the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray. Some have described prayer in this way: Prayer is the habitat of the union we share with God. It is the environment where the life of God joins with the souls of God's children. It is the air we breathe in the spiritual life. It is the cup which holds the water for the thirsty soul.

Jesus bookends his teaching on prayer with the word *Father*. He begins with, "*Father*, may your name be revered as holy," and ends with, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly *Father* give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Jesus' teaching on prayer is anchored in the nature and character of God. And God is shown to us as a Good Father.

God Concept

All of us carry in our minds an idea of who God is. Psychologists call this our "God concept". This concept is informed by what we are taught about God at church, school, and in the home. But perhaps the greatest influence on our God-concept is linked to our experience of having and/or being parents.

Every human on earth exists because they have two parents. Those parents were present or absent in particular and unique ways for us - sometimes for better and sometimes for worse. However they showed up for us (or didn't show up for us) and however they treated us left an indelible mark that informs how we think of God.

Jesus shows us God as a Good Father and just like a Good Father - God gives good gifts to his children. The greatest of these gifts is the Holy Spirit. Good Fathers also do not abandon us when we get stuck in our messes. When we are stuck in patterns that lead to us becoming the worst versions of ourselves - God steps in. That is why the Scriptures tell us that *whom the Lord loves he also chastens* (Hebrews 12:6).

In times of blessing and in times of difficulty -
God is a Good Father to us.

A hymn text from the Swedish Lutheran poet
Carolina Sandell Berg (b.1832) illustrates this
reality beautifully. You can find it in *Evangelical
Lutheran Worship* #790. May it be a reminder of
God's promise to you.

*Day by day, and with each passing moment,
Strength I find to meet my trials here;
Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment,
I've no cause for worry or for fear.
He, whose heart is kind beyond all measure,
Gives unto each day what He deems best,
Lovingly its part of pain and pleasure,
Mingling toil with peace and rest.*

May God bless you as you learn to more fully
trust the Father-heart of God.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bry Hewlett', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bryce Hewlett, SAM

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

Happy August, St. James!

Summer is quickly going by! Vacations are finishing up, and kids are getting prepared to head back to school. I had a great time during this 4th of July by taking a "girls trip" with my mom and sister to visit my brother in Michigan. It was a wonderful weekend filled with hiking, laughter, and love. It was a perfect weekend before starting back in school.

I recently have started my Master's program to become a Nurse Practitioner. I will still take this role as council president seriously, and my schoolwork will not diminish the work that I put into this role.

It is a time for us to look at new beginnings and how we can become closer to God.

Confirmation classes are going to be coming back to St. James.

We are hoping anyone who has not yet been confirmed, with the youngest starting 7th grade, would like to attend.

Please feel free to reach out to me **before August 31st** if you would like to participate.

Please keep watching for announcements for activities that will be happening this fall. We hope everyone can participate in the activities our committees are currently planning and organizing!

Take care,
Madeline Schmidt



S U M M E R

K I D S

CLUB

**6PM-8PM
TUESDAY
AUGUST 19TH**

Crafts / Games / Snacks / Fun

NO REGISTRATION NEEDED!

52ND RAGBRAI



RAGBRAI 2025: Iowa Falls to Cedar Falls

At RAGBRAI, the Iowa Bishops rode again to raise funds for anti-hunger advocacy. Bishop Amy Current and Bishop Kevin Jones began the day with a warm welcome at Bethany Lutheran in Iowa Falls, hosted by Robin, and are grateful for the hospitality of both Bethany and St. John Lutheran in Cedar Falls.

Throughout the day, spontaneous moments made the ride especially meaningful. Fellow cyclists asked about our synods, opening the door to thoughtful conversations. Bishop Current shared the joy of unexpectedly meeting members of First Lutheran, Cedar Rapids, on the route, as well as a moving moment in Applington, where residents of a long-term care facility waved and cheered from their patios as a beautiful reminder of the community support surrounding them throughout the journey.

Riders for this leg of the race also included Amy Jones, Rev. Jeff Thiemann, Pam Thiemann, Rev. Rodney Bluml, and Rev. Nathaniel Adkins. The photos below show the riders starting the day at Bethany Lutheran with host Robin, and the Halfway point on the route.

It's not too late to support the Ride Against Hunger. You can make a donation on the SEIA Synod's website: Check out <https://seiasynod.org> for more info!

Southeastern Iowa Synod Awarded The CaSTLE Project Grant

The Southeastern Iowa Synod, with our partner synods in Iowa and South Central Wisconsin, is honored to announce that it has been selected as a grant recipient through

[The CaSTLE Project](#) (The Country and Small Town Lived Ecclesiology Project), a five-year initiative led by Wartburg Theological Seminary to support renewal in small town and rural congregations.

With this grant, our synod will receive funding to support Mentor-Pastors for Synod Authorized Ministers. “We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with Wartburg Theological Seminary and The CaSTLE Project,” said Bishop Amy Current. “This grant will allow us to continue our 4 synod shared program of inviting, training, and accompanying synod authorized ministers (SAMS), equipping our SAMS, SAM mentors, and congregations and ministries served by SAMS in a future rooted in hope and purpose.”

You are invited to take a brief [5-minute survey](#) through the button below to help the Southeastern Iowa Synod establish a baseline of attitudes and beliefs as we begin our work with this grant. Thank you for being part of this important effort!

Fill out the survey on the SEAI Synod’s website:

Check out <https://seiasynod.org> for more info!

Contact Pastor Dan Kuckuck, Assistant to the Bishop at kuckuck@seiasynod.org for more information.

Celebrating Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

The Southeastern Iowa Synod celebrates Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's leadership and ministry. Living Lutheran's recent article, "Ordinary and Extraordinary," reflects on how everyday acts of service and profound moments of faith intersect to shape our life together in Christ.

The article lifts up how Presiding Bishop Eaton's leadership has been deeply shaped by her parish roots—grounded in the rhythms of worship, pastoral care, and everyday church life. Her role as the ELCA's first female presiding bishop has been marked by faithful presence through moments of both celebration and challenge. From local congregations to global crises, Eaton has led with grace, humility, and a deep love for the church.

We give thanks for her faithful service and encourage you to read and reflect on her ministry as the church prepares to discern new leadership.

Read more:

Check out <https://seiasynod.org> for more info!



2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly

The 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly is happening this week in Phoenix, Arizona, under the theme “For the Life of the World.” This gathering brings together leaders and representatives from across the ELCA to worship, reflect theologically, and engage in plenary sessions that shape the mission and direction of our church.

Our synod is sending those listed below as voting members to represent us at the Churchwide Assembly. They will help make decisions that shape the future of the ELCA and carry the voice of our synod into this important gathering.

- Ryan Arnold, St. John's in Des Moines
- Tyler Baars, Zion in Muscatine
- David Critchlow, St. Stephen in Urbandale
- Leslie Eichelberger, Shepherd of the Cross in Muscatine
- Levi Faas, Bethesda in Ames
- Keith Jones, Peace in Pella
- Eli Lambertson, St. Paul in Anamosa
- Madelyn La Plante, Faith in Eldridge
- Carrie Lewis LaPlante, Faith in Eldridge
- DaMisha McFarland-Pollock, Messiah and Bethany in Burlington
- Allison Olson, Grace in Des Moines
- Tricia Perron, Faith in Andover
- Ellen Rothweiler, Holy Trinity in Ankeny
- Mike Schmidt, Grace in Des Moines
- Leon Schwartz, St. Paul in Winterset
- Beth Wartick, Resurrection in Ankeny
- Anne Williams, Bethlehem in Vinton¹¹



**Sarah Circle meets at St. James at 1:00 p.m. on
Tuesday, August 19th.**

Sarah Circle met and discussed the second lesson in Flourishing Relationships by studying The Book of Ruth and her grief.

Pat Larson is the hostess in August, and Carol Leacox is the lesson leader. We will fill in the hostess-lesson leader schedule for our 25-26 year at this meeting— please plan to attend.

All women of St. James are welcome to attend Sarah Circle!



St James GANG

St James GANG will meet **August 21st at 11:30 a.m.**

Bring your own lunch! Dessert and beverages will be provided. See you all there!

Pat Larson



From the Quilt Block

St. James Quilters will meet

Tuesday July 22nd at 12:00 p.m.—4:00 pm.

July, five quilters met and finished 1 quilt and nearly finished 1 Queen size Quilt. If you have Tuesday afternoons free and want to help people survive, we are looking for people to help assemble quilts. If you have a sewing machine and can sew a straight seam, when there are kits in the narthex to be sewn, pick one up and choose how you want to sew weight strips together then sew seven seams—that is all.

Pieces be with you,

Shirley Richlen



Zion Lutheran Meal: Our next meal will be served on **Monday, September 22nd.**

Monday, July 28th, 90 meals were served! The meals were prepared by Judy Larson, Janene Anderson, and Audrey Lovell; Meals were served by the Schmidt family, the Southwell family, and Doug Larson; Cookies that were served were donated by many members of our congregation – thank you to all who helped these families in need!

If you would like to get involved with making or serving the meals, contact Judy Larson at 563-340-7902.

On July 17th, Social Ministry played bingo at Bettendorf Health Care Center—the residents are always thankful for our monthly visits!

The prizes offered are quarters or small stuffed animals—if anyone would like to donate stuffed animals we like them to be about the size of a beanie baby—small figurines are also well liked!

Thank you letter from Camp Courageous!

Dear St. James Lutheran Church,

On behalf of nearly 10,000 individuals with special needs who look forward to coming to Camp Courageous each year, I would like to acknowledge with sincere appreciation your gift. We are grateful for your ongoing support of the camp and the special campers who are served.

Since Camp Courageous is run on donations, without government assistance, formal sponsorship, or paid fund raisers your contribution makes possible this unique recreational and respite care facility for individuals with disabilities of all ages.

Camp Courageous stands as a living testimony to the generosity and love of individuals like yourself. Please stop by the camp anytime and see firsthand the good you are helping provide so many.

Thank you again for helping make this dream come true! It has been a wonderful 50+ years—growing from 211 campers to nearly 10,000 in a year-round program today!

Our warm and heartfelt wishes for a healthy and wonderful summer! Camp Courageous has had so much to be thankful for!

With sincere regards,

Charles W. Becker, CEO



We are about two-thirds away from reaching our goal of \$30,000.00 to complete our Capital Improvement Projects. ***Thank you*** to everyone who has helped to get us this far. We will have a few fund raising events this fall to help us reach our final goal.

PROJECTS COMPLETED

- Remove and replace concrete – installed drain tiles
- Remove and replace flooring - kitchen/Fellowship Hall serving area
- New tables and chairs
- Installed new office flooring
- Re-painted 13 doors
- Replaced 2 keyed locksets, 1 deadbolt, 5 passage sets
- Added 5 kick plates to doors
- New signs on two restroom doors
- Replaced closet bi-fold office doors
- Tidied up wiring in office

- Men/Women restroom floor
- Reflections Garden – total remake
- LED lighting 99% of church fixtures
- New exterior signs
- Exit lights, cords, batteries for musical instruments downstairs as required by Fire Department

PENDING PROJECTS TO BE COMPLETED

- Bell Tower – repairs
 - Replace cross on steeple
 - Cut sidewalk – upheaval areas
 - Elevator updates (waiting for estimate)
-

Council Meeting Minutes

The following motions were approved at the June 22nd Council Meeting.

Motion to approve Shirley Richlen as a Council Member for the remainder of 2025.

Motion by Tom. Seconded by Erik. Motion passed.

Check us out online!

YouTube Livestream

We livestream our services on YouTube each week to help us worship together and stay connected even when we are not at full health or out of town!

Youtube Link:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzjqnGF4g_QWtn_I2SqPL5Q

Youtube Channel QR Code:



Sermon Podcast on Spotify!

If you missed a Sunday, click the link below or scan the QR code & listen to the Sermon on Spotify

Please contact the church office if you need assistance accessing it!

Spotify Link:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/2bmzh6HFSREErSkUX5mlX?si=zG2ldhASSyCDYZi5QhDc1w>

Spotify Channel QR Code:



REMINDER!

**Deadline for September Epistle Articles
is Monday, August 25th.**

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

8/11 BRYCE HEWLETT

8/12 PAT HILL

8/16 DIANA WORLEY

8/18 STEVE MILLER II

8/20 JUSTINA PESSEIN

8/21 BOB JACOB

8/22 TONY WHITE

8/23 ERIK BAKKEN

8/24 BRIAN PETERS

8/24 DAVE SCHMIDT

8/26 ZACH MELBY

8/31 JOLEEN BAKKEN

8/31 JUDIE BROOKS

8/31 FRITZ VOSS

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

8/5 CHUCK & TAMMI MEYER

8/11 BRYCE & KIM HEWLETT

8/20 KELLY & DEB CROOKS

August 2025 Worship Assistants

Date	A. Minister	Reader	Acolyte	Usher	Usher	Altar Guild	Altar Guild
8/3/25	Tom Sladky	Pat Larson	Dex Hewlett	Jerry Nichols	Yvonne Nichols	Audrey Lovell	Mary M.
8/10/25	Ellen Hogbin	Linda Gross	Jude Hewlett	Pat Larson	Caroline Hicks	Pat Larson	Mary M.
8/17/25	Maddie Schmidt	Judie Brooks	Velvet Collison	Ron Mekalson	Kelly Crooks	Pat Larson	Mary M.
8/24/25	Caroline Hicks	Shirley Richlen	Edi Southwell	Ryan Martin	Ellen Hogbin	Shirley Richlen	Terry Martens
8/31/25	Shirley Richlen	Judie Brooks	Rilynne and Carter	Jerry Nichols	Yvonne Nichols	Ellen Hogbin	Terry Martens

*Please Note: If you find you cannot serve on the date/time scheduled, please arrange for your replacement, then **call or email your scheduler** to advise the name of your replacement. Your gracious cooperation is very much appreciated! Thanks!*

Schedulers

Altar Guild: Mary Meumann (563)355-7138;

marybusdvr@gmail.com

Ushers & Assisting Ministers:

Madlyn Wulgaert; stjamesbett@gmail.com

Children's Team: Kim Hewlett (856)296-1023;

kimhewlett18@gmail.com

Counters: Maddie Schmidt (563)570-6354;

madelineschmidt2016@gmail.com

Acolytes: Maddie Schmidt (563)570-6354;

Prayers for Healing and Support

Congregational Members

Ed Arp, **Lynn** Chamberlain, **Bev** Chappen,
Sherry Germanio, **Sandy** Henry, **Frieda** Houldsworth,
LaVonne Mienke, **Mark** Peters

Family and Friends

Annette & Rick (friends of Sue and Steve Miller), **Barry** (cousin of Ellen Hogbin), **Carol** (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken),
Donna (Ed Arp's sister), **Donnie** (friend of Deb Crooks),
Drew (Pat Larson's friend), **Emmett** (friend of Diana Worley),
Hattie (Frieda's sister)
Jason (Lynn Chamberlain & Sherry Germanio's son),
Joseph (friend of Bryce & Kim), **Konnor** (Bert Leder's grandson), **Maggie** Bayliss, **Mark** (friend of Jason Forari),
Michelle (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken),
Michelle (friend of Jason & Melissa Forari),
Myles (friend of Anna Forari), **Phil** (Steve Miller and Pat Sorensen's brother), **Ruthann** (Justina's mom),
Stan (relative of Fritz Voss), **Ted** (Ellen Hogbin's father-in-law),
Wally (Frieda's nephew),

Military Personnel

Anthony Karasek (Judy Larson's great nephew)
Lt. Col. **Brandon** Sandoval USAF (Pat Larson's grandson)
CPT **Eli** Smith (Jerry and Myrna Mattly's grandson)
Nathan Pearson USAF (Jenna & Kane Schmidt's friend)

*If you have anyone who needs to be taken off or added,
please notify the church office.*