



The Epistle August 2026

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

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you!

I've enjoyed exploring St. Matthew's gospel with you during these summer months. In his gospel we receive some of Jesus' clearest teaching about the *kingdom of God*. You heard this in my sermon last Sunday.

Jesus spoke to the people about the beauty of the domain of God. He spoke to them about different ways of being in the world that more closely align with God's intended purpose for them. He spoke to them about an environment so rich with beauty you can taste it. He spoke to them about a culture so rooted in love that no one lives in fear. He called it the kingdom of God.

I always mean what I say and I pick the words of my sermon carefully, but I understand this may sound like a lot of churchy gobbledegook to most anyone who isn't in seminary.

The truth is...**the kingdom of God is a hard concept to explain.** It's at the same time both here *and* not here, both obvious *and* illusive, both simple *and* complex. Since Matthew talks so openly about the kingdom of God, I thought it would be good to give further definition to this reality disclosed to us by Jesus. After all, the people in Jesus' day asked Jesus what the kingdom was like because they didn't know either. So we are in good company! In response to their questions, Jesus told them about the kingdom because he does know what it is like. He came from there. It is his home country.

Put in simple terms, **the kingdom of God is wherever God is king.** The kingdom is wherever God reigns with God's people in the fullness of God's blessing. This is happening in a lot of different places and at a lot of different times. That means God's kingdom is happening right now. That means God's kingdom is also in the future. The kingdom is in your heart. The kingdom is also in the world around us.

The kingdom of God is where God reigns with God's people in the fullness of God's blessing.

Now let me name one thing that the kingdom of God **is not**. The kingdom of God is not the same thing as *heaven*. For Christians in America it is common to refer to *heaven* as “the place I go when I die.” What happens when we die is largely a mystery, but we’ll save that topic for another conversation. For the time being, suffice it to say that when Jesus tells us about the kingdom of God in the gospel of Matthew, he is not talking about going to heaven when we die.

Instead of connecting “*kingdom of God*” to “*heaven when I die*”, think about it more in terms of God’s reign with God's people in the fullness of God's blessing. Hopefully, that will keep us on the same page as we continue to learn from Jesus in the gospel of St. Matthew.

Lastly, thank you for the feedback surveys you submitted regarding our updated sound system in the nave. We have made some minor adjustments based on your feedback and I am pleased to say, the upgrade has been warmly received by the congregation.

The project to update the sound system is complete! A hearty ‘thank you’ goes to the Property Committee for their support of the project and the hours they committed to installing the system. An additional hearty ‘thank you’ goes to Steve Able who guided the project and spent many hours planning and communicating with the company who supplied the equipment as well as many hours soldering and piecing the equipment together. This project has been another example of the joy of doing the work of Jesus with you all here at our church.

God bless you all and may the peace of God which passes understanding guide and establish your hearts in God’s love.

Vicar Bryce Hewlett, SAM

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Fourth Quarter of Life An Adult Education Study

This fall, we will be studying a book called *The Fourth Quarter of Your Life: Embracing what Matters Most* written by Allen Hunt & Matthew Kelly.

If you're interested in participating, please sign up in the Narthex or contact the office at (563) 355-4161.

Participants will need to purchase the book.



The Fourth Quarter of Your Life: Embracing what Matters Most

Scan the QR code to purchase the book online.

WEDNESDAYS AT 10:00 A.M. STARTING SEPTEMBER 9TH

September 9	September 16	September 23
September 30	October 7	October 14
October 21	October 28	November 4
November 11		

SUMMER KIDS CLUB!

The next Summer Kids Club for elementary children at St. James is scheduled for Wednesday, August 13th from 6-8pm.

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

Happy August, St. James!

What a month we have had! Thank you all for bearing with me the weekend I ran both services. Writing about my own faith and the Word is very different than writing about statistics of heart failure patients, like I am normally used to. We also celebrated our church's namesake with a service and potluck at the park, which was well attended.

As we look at August, may we be reminded that every season carries a purpose. Though the days may feel long and the heat may be heavy, God's grace remains constant, refreshing our spirits and giving us strength for each new day.

This month, let us all choose gratitude. Let us appreciate the blessings that surround us: the people we love, the lessons we have learned, the opportunities approaching us, and the moments that bring rest to our hearts. Even when life feels uncertain and unknown, we can hold firmly to the promise that God is working all things together for good.

May August be a month of renewed faith, deeper love, and joyful hope. May we encourage one another, offer kindness, and remain steadfast in prayer. Let us walk forward with confidence—not because we know exactly what tomorrow holds, but because we know the One who holds tomorrow.

Be good. Do good. God bless,

Madeline Schmidt



Sarah Circle will meet **Tuesday, August 18th at 1PM.**



St James GANG

The St. James GANG will be meeting on August 20th at 11:30 a.m. Bring your own lunch, dessert and beverages will be provided. All are welcome to attend, come and

bring a friend!

Contact Pat Larson at 563-343-2142 for more information.



August 2026

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 the strips together then sew seven ½ inch seams. That is all.

Quilters will meet August 25th from 12-4 p.m.

Pieces be with you,
Shirley Richlen



Social Ministry News

Social Ministry News

The next Zion meal is September 28th. Currently we are looking for people to help with serving the Zion meals! It takes less than an hour. It is very fulfilling and they are so grateful for whatever we serve! If you would

like to volunteer, please contact Judy Larson at 563-340-7902!

Bingo is August 20th at the Bettendorf Health Care Center. The residents win prizes such as small stuffed animals (Beanie Baby size), and quarters. We enjoy calling the numbers for them and they are always happy to see us!

Our meetings are at 4:00 p.m. on the first Monday of every month – please consider joining us and thanks for your continued support!

The next meeting is August 3rd at 4:00 p.m. in the conference room.

AUGUST WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Acolyte	Usher	Usher
8/2/26	Shirley Richlen	Pat Larson	Dex Hewlett	Ryan Martin	Ellen Hogbin
8/9/26	Tom Sladky	Judie Brooks	Jude Hewlett	Jerry Nichols	Yvonne Nichols
8/16/26	Jason Forari	Amanda Southwell	Edi Southwell	Melissa Forari	Ana Forari
8/23/26	Justina Pessein	Kaylee Pessein	Velvet Collison	Fritz Voss	Judy Larson
8/30/26	Shirley Richlen	Judy Larson	Dex Hewlett	Pat Larson	Ellen Hogbin

Altar Guild:

Aug 1 Marilyn Pieart & Diana Worley

Aug 8 Ellen Hogbin & Audrey Lovell

Aug 15 Ellen Hogbin & Audrey Lovell

Aug 22 Mary Meumann & Pat Larson

Aug 29 Mary Meumann & Pat Larson



Proverbs 27:17

*Iron sharpens iron, and
one man sharpens
another.*

August 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9AM Worship	Maxine Duhm 10AM Visitation 11AM Funeral 4PM Social Ministry Mtg.		6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry 11AM Service at BHCC		8AM Men's Prayer Breakfast 5PM Worship
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9AM Worship 10AM Coffee & Convo. 10AM Finance Mtg.			6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry 2:30PM BINGO @ BETT Health Care Center 6-8PM Summer Kid's Club		5PM Worship
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9AM Worship 10AM Council Mtg.	6:30PM Christian Ed. Zoom Mtg.	1PM Sarah Circle	6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry 11:30AM GANG 11AM Service at BHCC		5PM Worship
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
9AM Worship		12-4PM Quilting	6-8PM Food Pantry			5PM Worship

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

8/23 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

Prayers for Healing and Support

Congregational Members

Ed Arp, **Bev** Chappen, **Sandy** Henry,
Frieda Houldsworth, **Jeryl** Krumbholz, **Jim** Krumbholz,
LaVonne Mienke, **Shirley** Niewald

Family and Friends

Amanda (friend of Melissa), **Annette & Rick** (Steve & Sue Miller & Pat Sorenson's sister & brother-in-law), **Brenda** (Friend of Janene Anderson), **Donna** (Ed Arp's sister), **Drew** (Pat Larson's friend), **Elliot** (Gary and Eunice Grell's great grandson), **Emmett** (friend of Diana Worley), **Hattie** (Frieda's sister), **Jane** (friend of Deb Crooks),
Jason (Sherry Germanio's son),
Karen (Shirley's Aunt), **Larry** (family of Doug Larson),
Lylah (friend of Noa), **Mark** (friend of Jason Forari),
Michelle (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken),
Pat (Judy Larson's Sister-in-Law),
Phil (Steve Miller and Pat Sorensen's brother),
Stacy (Fritz' son's cousin), **Steve** (friend of Pat Larson),
Wally (Frieda's nephew)

Those Whose Duty it is to Protect Others

Anthony Karasek (Judy Larson's great nephew)
LT. Chris Tribble USN (Erik & Joleen Bakken's friend).
CPT Eli Smith (Jerry and Myrna Mattly's grandson)
Nathan Pearson USAF (Jenna & Kane Schmidt's friend)
Tyler McLaughlin, First Responder (Family of Pat Larson)

In Memoriam

Maxine Duhm

*If you need to add or remove someone from
the prayer list, please contact the church office.*

