



The Star

Bethlehem and St. Mark Together in Service

Volume 24, Issue 9

September 2026

HOSPICE OF JACKSON COUNTY



At Hospice of Jackson County, we understand that grief is a journey that looks different for every individual. We are honored to support families not only during hospice care, but also in the months that follow.

Below is information about our upcoming Memorial Service and Grief Support Group. These opportunities are open to anyone experiencing loss, regardless of whether their loved one received hospice services.

Our Memorial Service offers a time for quiet reflection, an opportunity to share memories, and a small remembrance ceremony to honor those we hold close in our hearts. It is our hope that this gathering provides comfort, connection, and a gentle reflection on the lives of those we have lost. Our Grief Support Group provides a welcoming environment where individuals can find encouragement, understanding, and ongoing support as they navigate the grieving process. We would be grateful if you would share this information with the families you serve. Together, we can help ensure that those who are grieving know they are not alone and that caring resources are available within our community.

Fall Memorial Service:

Sept. 7 at 4:30 p.m. at

611 W Quarry St. Maquoketa

Grief Support Group:

Every Thursday Sept. 15- Oct. 20 at 5:30 p.m.

611 W Quarry St. Maquoketa

Pastors Office Hours Joint Worship

The council has decided that Pastor will no longer have a need for office hours. If you are in need of pastoral care you can contact her at:

406-478-9518 or Email at prmbp10@gmail.com and make arrangements with her personally.

Council also decided to extend the Joint Worship through the month of September.

Joint Worship at St. Marks: Sept. 13.

Joint Worship at BLC: Sept. 27.

Fall Circle Meetings

September Circle meeting will be a visit with Jeannett at Wheatland Villa on Saturday, Sept. 12. Anyone wishing to carpool let Connie know and meet at the church at 9 AM.

Topic for Fall

“Bold faith on an unexpected journey,”
by the Rev. Tiffany Chaney

Faith often leads us down paths we didn't expect—into wilderness places, across unfamiliar lands, and through seasons of grief and hope. This three-session study takes us on a journey with Hagar, Ruth and Mary Magdalene, women whose bold faith transformed their unexpected stories. Their encounters with God remind us that we, too, are seen, sustained and sent to carry good news into the world.

These studies will start in October.

Council Meets

Bethlehem Congregation Council met for the regular monthly meeting on June 21. In business, they:

- Reminder of VBS and Ecumenical worship;
- Discussion on basement flooding
- Update church's profile compensation number to meet synod guidelines
- Pay half of the annual church deep cleaning
- Cancel July meeting

Heard the following Treasurer's report

Balance 6/01/26	\$ 6,015.65
June Income	15,090.79
July Income	25,285.89
June Expenses	7,381.68
July Expenses	<u>32,605.13</u>
Balance 7/31/26	\$ 6,405.52

Shepherding Thoughts

Jesus said, "It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles. Whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach and goes out into the sewer, but what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart and that is what defiles."

Those words were in our gospel reading on a Sunday in August. When read we understand that Jesus is teaching his disciples to not get hung up on dietary rules set by the religious leaders because what goes into the mouth is not as important as what comes out of the mouth. This lesson is not about food but about being kind to people.

When I read this, I couldn't help but get curious about one of the words. It made me hesitate in my reading and took me away from the rest of the teaching. The word I'm referring to is sewer. I couldn't understand what Jesus meant by sewer. That seems like a more modern term. Did they really have a sewer system in Jesus' time? Rather than just wondering about it, I did some research and yes, they had a sewer system.

In larger cities, especially in the Roman period, public toilets with running sewer systems were available to the wealthy and sometimes to the general public. These were built over channels of flowing water that would carry the waste away. This type of sewer system was not as sophisticated as our modern system, but quite impressive for Jesus' time.

Now we all know about why the word sewer was used by Jesus and that there were really sewers in the cities during Jesus' time on earth. Another interesting fact is that archaeologists have found stone toilet seats that date back to before 586 BC. These toilet seats were used in outhouses, which most people had in some form.

I'm not sure how often this information will come in handy for you, but my point is that when something piques your interest as you read the Bible, don't just pass over it. Take some time to gather information about it. You may be surprised at what you learn.

See you in worship!
Pastor Roberta

September Worship Assistants

Ushers: Diana Ihns

Lectors:

6- Elsa Sullivan
13- **Joint Worship OJ**
20- Tim Thiede
27- Connie Kleppe

Acolytes:
volunteer

Johann Ihns
Elsa Sullivan

Communion Assistant:

Brent Ihns

Bread Maker:

Barb Labath

Altar Care:

Connie Kleppe, Kathy Duffey



Teller: Jone Paarmann

Coffee Makers:

6- Rochelle Busch
13- **Joint Worship OJ**
20- Diana Ihns
27- Connie Kleppe

Worship Assistants St. Mark

Lector:

Acolyte:

6- Lori Petersen Hayden Petersen
13- Brenda Vacek Willa Lasack
20- Jade Derynck Macklin Petersen
27- **Joint Worship at Lost Nation**

Birthdays and Anniversaries

BLC

1 Kathy Duffey
8 Kathy Becker
11 Elsa Sullivan
15 Archer Willimack
23 Jeff Fields
25 Kelly Schroeder
29 Doug Wulf
30 Bruce Von Sprecken

Anniversaries

10 Dale and Laurie Rickels
14 Marlene and Darrel Hicks
15 Ellen and Bill Pithan
17 Haley and Jason Sullivan
24 Jone and Les Paarmann
27 Kathy and Rex Duffey

St. Mark

- 6 Elmer Shoaff
- 8 Lucas Fowler
- 11 Brittney Clark Watson
- 13 Colton Heims
- 15 Diane VonSprecken
- 16 Kelli Depfer, Caitlyn Depfer
- 17 Adreanna Flockhart
- 19 Jamie Slouha, Rhonda Jeffery
- 24 Molly Koranda
- 27 Lovan Vorwald

Anniversaries

- 12 Murray & Michele Shedeck
- 22 Ronald & Carmie Nowachek 1973
- 27 Danny & Jamie Slouha 1986
- 29 Brent & Cindy Buresh 1979

News from the office at St Mark's

Joint Worship opportunities will continue through the month of September. Anyone who has any thoughts of continuing, discontinuing, altering joint worship events are encouraged to share with Pastor Roberta or any council member from other congregation.

We remember in prayer the family and friends of Lawretta Busch who passed away in August. Thank you to all who organized the luncheon, served, provided food or helped clean up. The family was so thankful and appreciative.

St. Mark Church Council will meet on September 20th following the worship service.

The distribution day and time for the OJ Community Food Pantry may be changing. When we get the new hours, we will share with all.

The water leak in the church basement has been addressed and hopefully corrected. Thank you to Denny VonSprecken for leading that project.

Please keep all school staff and students in your prayers as the new school year begins.

BWELCA HiLites

Tuesday, Sept. 1st - board meeting at 6 p.m.

There will be quilt top kits available to take home and sew beginning Sunday, August 30. Please feel free to grab one or two and sew to your heart's content.



It was decided that we will visit Jeanette on Saturday, Sept. 12 in place of circle. We will be leaving from the church at 9 a.m. Please let Connie know if you plan on attending so we can carpool.

We are still collecting items for the DVIP - the needs lists are on the back bulletin board and on the table in the south basement room. The items will be delivered to the DVIP on Wednesday, September 2. We will also take cookies along, so if you would like to send cookies, they will need to be individually wrapped.

Officers up for election are : Mission Community/Justice and Mission Action/Discipleship. Jone Paarmann has agreed to run again for Mission Community/Justice and Jody Holtz has replaced Rochelle Busch for the position of Mission Action/ Discipleship and is running for another term. We also need a V.P. please consider and let any board member know. We will vote on the ballot at our September meeting.

The SE Iowa Convention/ Gathering at Zion Lutheran in Iowa City on September 26. information/ registration is on back bulletin board. Registration is due September 1st. Registration forms are on the tables at both entrances.

News from Camp Ewalu "The Rythrm"

We Want Your Vintage Gear

Our "Vintage Rack" in the Camp Store has been very popular! If you're cleaning out closets or just need a new home for some "old" camp gear that you find, bring or send it to us at Ewalu! Vintage items are HIGHLY sought after by our summer staff, and your items will find a new home with folks who really want them!

Even if your items are not in great condition, they might work for quilters looking for items to use for a project to donate to the Ewalu Quilt Auction.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO:

Gently wash your items, then drop them off at the Ewalu office or mail them to us:

Camp Ewalu, Vintage Shop

37776 Alpha Ave.

Strawberry Point, IA 52076

Feel free to bring your items and drop them off if you are attending one of our upcoming camp events!

**Fall Work Day
Saturday, Oct. 17**

Help get camp ready for winter....

With summer camp behind us, we're already thinking about the cold season ahead! Our Fall Work Day is coming up on Saturday, October 17. Whether you're coming as an individual, a family, or a group, we'd love to have your help getting camp ready for winter!

Projects for the day include tasks like staining picnic tables, spreading limestone rock around fire rings, spreading wood chips on the ropes course, trail repairs, tree cutting, wood splitting, and much more. Dress for the weather, bring work gloves if you have some, and come for as much of the day

as you wish! Contact Paul Frantsen at Property@ewalu.org to let him know you are coming to help, or set up another time to volunteer at camp. We always have projects available!

October 17 Schedule:

9:00 a.m. Work Projects

12:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. Work Projects

4:00 p.m. Departure

If you need a place to stay on Friday night, let us know by calling the camp office at 563-933-4700 or emailing office@ewalu.org (volunteers can stay for free if rooms are available). We'd love to see you at camp during this beautiful fall season!

39th Annual Ewalu Quilt Auction

Online Auction:
Sept. 14-20

Live Auction:
Sept. 19

EWALU
Camp & Retreat Center

QUILT RAFFLE

\$50 per ticket

Win a gorgeous king-size quilt pieced and quilted by Billijo Eckheart, with hand-binding by Jeanne Helgersen. The pattern is "Hocus Pocus" by Judy Niemeyer, a beautiful paper piecing technique with jewel tones, neutrals and white. The quilt measures 118 inches by 118 inches, so it will fit a king bed or a queen bed with a large drop. Buy more tickets to increase your chances of winning!

Value of quilt: \$5,000



Proceeds support Camp Ewalu!

<https://Auctria.Events/EwaluQuiltAuction>

THE RULES: One winner will be chosen at random at the start of the Ewalu Live Auction, at 1 PM Saturday, September 19, 2026. Ticket sales will end at noon September 19, 2026. Tickets can only be purchased digitally; no paper tickets sold. Contact the Ewalu office at 563-933-4700 or email office@ewalu.org to pay for a raffle ticket via check or cash.

September

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 BWELCA Bd. 6 PM	2	3	4	5
6 Holy Communion LN 9 AM Fellowship 9:45 AM St Mark 10:30 PM	7	8	9	10	11	12 Joint Circle Visit Jeannette Day Meet at church at 9 AM to carpool
13 Joint Worship at St. Mark 9 AM Fellowship 9:45 AM	14 Newsletter Items Due	15	16	17	18	19 EWALU Quilt Festival Strawberry Point
20 Council BLC 8 AM St. Mark 11:15 AM Holy Communion LN 9 AM Fellowship 9:45 AM St Mark 10:30 AM	21	22	23	24	25	26 SWO Gathering at Zion in Iowa City
27 Joint Worship at BLC 9 AM Fellowship 9:45 AM	28	29	30			

2026

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
403 Pleasant Street
Lost Nation, Iowa 52254

SEPTEMBER 2026

Bethlehem: Lost Nation

Pastor Roberta Pierce

Office Phone 678-2301

Cell 406-478-9518

Email prmbp10@gmail.com

Office Secretary Deanne Bennett

Church Phone 678-2301

secretary@bethlehemln.com

Website www.bethlehemln.com

St. Mark: Oxford Junction

Email stmarkoj@gmail.com

Office Phone 826-2761

St Mark Sunday Schedule

Worship 10:30 a.m.

Joint worship at 9:00 a.m.

Bethlehem Sunday Schedule

Worship 9:00 a.m.

Fellowship 9:45 a.m.

Office Hours:

Pastor Roberta

*She can be reached by a call or
text to her cell phone.*

406-478-9518

Bethlehem Secretary Hours:

Tuesday: 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Thursday: 11:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

If you need to enter the church and do not
have a key, always call ahead to be certain
someone is there.