

THE VOICE

OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

December 2009

Volume 49, Number 11

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inside . . .*

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Advent Sunday opportunities

Each Sunday afternoon or evening in Advent, there will be special events or worship to help us all focus on the coming of God into our lives, and the gift of God's grace that we celebrate at Christmas. All are welcome!

Sunday, Nov. 29 - Sunday Night at St. John's, 5:00 p.m. Informal, intergenerational worship service.

Sunday, Dec. 6 - Advent Fair, 12:00 noon: crafts, mission fair, food, song, fun! (*see back page*)

Sunday, Dec. 13 - Children's Christmas Program, 3:00 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 20 - Festival of Lessons and Carols, with Senior and Jubilate Choirs - 5:00 p.m.



Light of the World

*Sunday School Christmas Program
Dec. 13, 3:00 p.m.*

All are invited to attend the Sunday School Christmas Program on **Sunday, Dec. 13** in St. John's Hall. Pre-service music by children in Kindergarten – grade 5 begins at 2:45 p.m. The program, "Light of the World," begins at 3:00 p.m. and is performed by children in preschool – grade 5. Come let our children help us prepare for Christmas!

Note for families of children in the program: Each family is asked to bring a dozen cookies to share for refreshments following the program. If your child is unable to participate please notify his/her teacher or call Julie Brehmer at 645-4429.



Christmas Worship at St. John's

Thursday, Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve

3:30 and 5:00 p.m. Christmas Vespers

11:00 p.m. Christmas Candlelight and Communion

Friday, Dec. 25 – Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. Festive Christmas Eucharist

11:30 a.m. Christmas Dinner for All
(*see back page for more information*)

The *Voice* is a monthly publication of St. John's Lutheran Church of Northfield, Minnesota. Articles for the *Voice* must be submitted by the 15th of each month to the Church Office or by e-mail to:

office@stjohns-elca.org.

For information, contact the Church Office:

phone: 507-645-4429

fax: 507-645-9633

e-mail:

office@stjohns-elca.org

website:

www.stjohns-elca.org

Church office hours:

Mon. - Thurs.

9:00 a.m. to noon and
1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Friday

9:00 a.m. to noon and
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

The vision of St. John's: growing as disciples + becoming signs of God's love for each other and the world

Prayer and Care Ministry

Pray without ceasing.
1 Thessalonians 5:17

Prayer Ministry

Gathered in the Word: Gathered in the Word – Mark the season of Advent with this time of silence and prayer, guided by Scripture. Meets Thursday, December 17 at 7 p.m. in the Fireside Room.

Prayer Chain: Prayer requests are welcome for any concern or thanksgiving. Requests are kept confidential and not included in Sunday morning prayers unless specifically requested. Contact Mary Cisar with a prayer request or to become a prayer chain volunteer: macisar@gmail.com or 663-1097.

What Should We *BE* for Christmas?

Fall is the season of celebrations. At church we celebrate the Reformation, All Saints, Christ the King, and Advent. Fall also brings Halloween and Thanksgiving, along with preparations for Christmas and the New Year. Now that December has arrived, are you feeling a bit of holiday stress?

What helped you enjoy Thanksgiving and Halloween? Perhaps it was needing simply to *BE* something. What are we expected to *BE* for Thanksgiving? Thankful! Hungry, too, and perhaps organized. *BEING* for Thanksgiving is manageable. And for Halloween we can *BE* whatever we choose! To *BE* at Halloween is a creative opportunity, a time for imagination, surprises, and sweet treats.

But have you thought about what will you *BE* for Christmas, or only what you will *DO*? The *DOING* we associate with December may agitate us and overwhelm us, fill our calendars and empty our bank accounts. As you plan the days ahead and list what you must *DO*, ask first, What will I *BE* for Christmas this year? Try to think peaceful rather than busy, welcoming rather than anxious, thoughtful rather than extravagant, loving rather than dutiful. However, *BEING* also has its challenges. Managing expectations—the ones other people have for us and those we have for ourselves—can feel impossible to meet.

Stephen Ministers are trained to offer caring support and a listening ear to individuals coping with a variety of difficulties in their lives, at holiday time and any time. If you, or someone you know, is struggling to *BE* what she or he wishes to be, and would benefit from a Stephen Minister, please contact a pastor or Joan Halvorson, 645-8445.

Bear one another's
burdens, and in
this way you will
fulfill the law of
Christ.

Galatians 6:2



Providing one-
to-one care and
encouragement

A Grief Support Group continues to meet this month at St. Dominic Catholic Church in Northfield. Meets Mondays December 7 and 14 from 6:30-8:00p.m. For more information contact Nancy Ludescher at 645-8816, ext. 203.

Grief Booklets: "Journeying through Grief" is a resource for the first year following the death of a loved one. The booklets are free and available to all. Contact a pastor for more information.

Blessed are they who
mourn, for they shall
be comforted.

Matthew 5:4

Bereavement Ministry



There were no St. John's members that died in this month last year. We list them here each month, when we have names to list, so that we can remember these loved ones and their families in prayer with reverence and affection.

From our pastors . . .

The Coming Light

The Benedictine monks of Christ in the Desert Monastery live in the Chama River valley in northern New Mexico. Every day members of the community wake up in the darkness of early morning for a silent prayer vigil. Worshipers gather in a chapel lit by two small candles and, when skies are clear, millions of stars whose distant light shines through four large windows above the simple altar. As the morning light breaks behind the ancient cliff walls the monks break their silence with the hymns of praise in the service called Lauds. Together they begin the day worshipping Christ, the light of the world.

Not many of us welcome the dawn with such exalted worship. Many days it's enough to fumble out of bed and try to make it to work on time. But in these shortened days of December we cannot help but see the growing darkness around us and we know the anticipation of waiting for lengthening daylight and the longer days ahead.

The Church marks the weeks of Advent by lighting candles not to tide

us over this season of long nights. Our need is greater and our hope is deeper. In this dark world and in the darkness of our lives we look forward to the promised One whose light will bring healing and new life to all creation. We light Advent candles to remember that "a light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:5) With Scripture's witness, the Church proclaims that Christ is the Light – the light that God sent into the world to scatter the darkness; the light that shines in and through the lives of God's people; and the light of the kingdom to come when all creation will be restored and redeemed in God's bright glory.

Faith is keeping vigil in the dark, waiting for the dawn to break. Faith is welcoming the rays of Light that are already breaking through - with songs of praise and thanksgiving. Faith is sharing these days of waiting and rejoicing together.

A blessed Advent and Christmas -

Marks



November Actions

Memorials and Gifts

Special Gifts and Memorials

In memory of **Arnhold Wermager**: by Steve and Jennifer Edwins

In memory of **Vernal Benrud** : by Charles and Mary Wenz

In memory of **Rebecca Johnson** by: Gerhard and Gloria Knutson

St. John's Foundation

In memory of **Arnhold Wermager**: by Jennifer Facciani.

In memory of **Ralph Haugen**: by Bob and Cora Scholz.

In memory of **Juta Millert**: by Bob and Cora Scholz, Sanford and Kathryn Haugen

Music Fund

In memory of **Mae Odette**: by the estate of Mae Odette

Kitchen Fund

In memory of **Mae Odette**: by the estate of Mae Odette

Building Fund

In memory of **Rebecca Johnson**: by I. Ruth Hansen

Pastors' Emergency Fund

In memory of **Rebecca Johnson**: by Richard and Jo Dahlin

Radio Fund

In memory of **Arnhold Wermager**: by Shirley Falck

In memory of **Eileen Reed**: by Millie Johnson

Other Actions

Baptisms

William Michael Hessian, son of Jeff and Mara; sponsors are Brandon Arnold, Alexandra Schillin, Todd and Candace Caven; Nov. 8, 2009

Tatum Quinn Spangenberg, daughter of Erich and Holly; sponsors are Jeremy Calverley and Jill Spangenberg; Nov. 15, 2009

Radio Broadcasts

Nov. 29, 2009, in memory of **Dagny Christensen** and **Les Gustafson** by Judy Christensen

Second Wednesday Meal Dec. 9

The Second Wednesday meal is Wednesday, Dec. 9 5:15 - 6:15 p.m. in St. John's Hall. All are invited for this time of fellowship! Adult Ministry and Education board serves pulled pork sandwiches. Free will offering will be taken. If you are able to help set up, serve, or clean up please contact Regina Hassanally at 645-4429, ext 24 or reginah@stjohns-elca.org.

Annual Meeting Jan. 31

The Congregation Council has set Sunday, Jan. 31, as the date for the Annual Meeting of the congregation. The meeting will be after second service that day, preceded by a potluck lunch. A preview meeting to look over the agenda and annual report and ask questions will be held the previous Sunday, Jan. 24, at the St. John's Forum.

Las Posadas at El Milagro

El Milagro Lutheran Church in south Minneapolis, a mission partner of St. John's, welcomes everyone to join the congregation's *Las Posadas* celebration on Saturday, Dec 12, from 6:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Festivities include dinner, candlelight caroling, worship, piñatas, and sweets! Mark the days of Advent with our brothers and sisters at El Milagro, 3751 17th Ave. South, Minneapolis, 612-721-5021.

Music Life at St. John's

Music Ministry Notes:

- Rejoice Ringers are now ringing three new bass bells. The B3 bell has been given by Mark and Sherry Benson in memory of Sherry's mother, Karen Beck, who died in 2004. The other two bass bells were purchased with a generous grant from the St. John's Foundation.
- There's still time to be a part of the Senior Choir for the Advent season as we prepare for our service of Lessons and Carols at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 20. Join us on Wednesdays (Dec. 2, 9 and 16) at 7:00 p.m. for our weekly rehearsals. There will also be an extra rehearsal Saturday morning, Dec. 5, from 10:00 a.m. to noon and a dress rehearsal on Saturday, Dec. 19 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. For more information, call Dan Fenn at 645-4429 ext. 58.



Shared Ministry

After we graduated, one of my friends from college moved to New York to work as a volunteer coordinator for a food shelf. Because I lived in Philadelphia at the time I would periodically take the train north to visit her. On one such visit, over Thanksgiving, I volunteered to help in the food shelf. They were so overwhelmed by donations I could barely walk through the stock room as I sorted through hundreds of cans of yams. While the surge in donations was appreciated many of the staff members wished aloud that people would give consistently throughout the year. They had plenty of food to hand out for the holidays but once Christmas was over the stock on the shelves dramatically decreased.

This pattern is not uncommon nor is it surprising. Giving and service are a part of the holidays. At no other time is there such an emphasis on helping to meet the needs of others. Then the holidays end and the emphasis fades but the needs remain the same. I'm not quite sure what happens to us as we sleep on Christmas night that causes us to forget the acts of service we deemed so important just a few hours before.

Perhaps it is simply that during the Advent and Christmas season opportunities for service seem to multiply and they fade from view as the decorations are put away and the twinkling lights begin to dim. I want to assure you: at St. John's the opportunities to give and to serve will continue. I hope this holiday season you'll reflect on not only how you can give and serve now but how you might capture part of the giving spirit of Christmas and carry it with you throughout the year.

Regina Hassanally, Director of Shared Ministries

SERVING TO LOVE  LOVING TO SERVE

From the Benevolence and Social Concerns Board:

Late afternoon Nov. 17, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved S.1524, the Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act of 2009. Fourteen senators supported it and three did not. This is a significant first step in reforming U.S. foreign assistance and a major milestone for our 2009 Offering of Letters. The changes that will result from S. 1524 will be of immense help to Dr. Rajiv Shah, the newly nominated administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. In the House, our co-sponsors for H.R. 2139, the Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009, continue to increase. Growing support for these

two bills in Congress was instrumental in moving President Barack Obama's order for a presidential study directive to begin the process of developing a national strategy for our foreign aid. The bills also helped push the State Department to begin the first-ever Quadrennial Development and Diplomacy Review that is bringing together an all-of-government approach to assess our foreign assistance delivery systems. As these bills continue to move forward, we will keep you posted. Without your financial support, your letters, your visits, and your phone calls, we would have never been able to win these significant milestones in our campaign to reform the way we deliver U.S. aid to the world's hungry and poor people. As Thanksgiving approaches, I give thanks to God for faithful supporters like you and for God's guidance as we continue to speak out for our hungry and poor neighbors.

Grace and peace, *David Beckman, Bread for the World*

From the Faith and Health Board

Preventing Falls in Your Home

Falls can happen at home for many different reasons. There are several things that are known to add to your risk of falling such as poor vision, poor nutrition, a history of falls, certain medications and certain conditions in the home. The Faith and Health Board would like to share with you some advice from the National Center for Patient Safety that will help lower your risk for falls at home.

Lighting: Replace burned out light bulbs, use a night light in your bathroom, hallway and bedroom, keep a flashlight available, make sure that lights are easy to turn on and off.

Floors: Remove scatter and throw rugs from your home, keep floors free from clutter, wipe up spills immediately, make sure your floors are not slippery, do not have extension cords where you walk.

In Your Bathroom: Use a raised toilet seat and safety frame for ease in getting up from and sitting down on your toilet, set the water temperature at 120 degrees or lower, to prevent burns and falls from trying to avoid the hot water, place non-skid adhesive strips on the bottom of your tub, use liquid soap or soap-on-a-rope to help avoid dropping your soap.

Other Locations: Store items that you use often at waist level, select furniture with armrests for support as you are getting up and sitting down, keep your telephone within easy reach, if you experience dizziness and weakness, you should consult your doctor. You are at risk of a fall. Following these simple steps can help you "catch yourself", reducing the risk of falling and avoiding the serious consequences associated with falls.

News and Events

Poinsettias for sale

St. John's High School youth are selling poinsettias for the Christmas season. All plants are \$15 and come in a 6" pot and can be ordered in red or white.



How to order: Fill out this form and return to the church office, OR sign up at a table in the Commons on Dec. 4 or Dec. 11

All orders must be placed by Dec. 11. Please pay when ordering, checks payable to St. John's Lutheran Church

How do I pick up my Poinsettia?

1. You can order the poinsettia and leave it at church to decorate for our Christmas services - they make our worship lovely! You can pick it up after the Christmas Day service.
2. You can pick it up the week before Christmas.
3. Poinsettias that are not picked up after the Christmas services will be brought to the nursing homes or to our homebound members.

Name (If you are purchasing this in memory or in honor of someone, please indicate how you'd like your name printed - example: The Smith family)	Phone	\$15/Each		Will you be leaving it here through Christmas?	Check (made out to St. John's)
		Red	White		

This poinsettia is in *memory* of: _____

This poinsettia is in *honor* of: _____

Mission Outreach



Hands and Feet Project for December: Community Christmas Dinner

This month's Hands and Feet project, St. John's monthly intergenerational service project, is the Community Christmas Dinner served in St. John's Hall from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Christmas Day. Help is needed setting up, providing food, serving, and cleaning up. *See article on the back page for more information.* Thank you for being the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

Thank you to all St. John's members who volunteered at last month's Feed My Starving Children event in Northfield! Over 300,000 meals were packaged and \$55,000 was raised over the three day event. Meal packages will be distributed through church and non-governmental organizations to children and families around the world. Check out photos from the day at www.5thbridge.org.

Serving on Sundays in December

Acolytes

- December 6** (8:30) Cecilia Kryzda, Madeline Miller; (10:45) Daniel Langehough, Amanda Nelson
December 13 (8:30) Ryan Buck, Emily Westerback; (10:45) McKenna Boyum, Nicholas Pelletier
December 20 (8:30) Nathan Berthelsen, Jonah Berthelsen; (10:45) Kelsey Bull, Peter Crippen
December 24 (11:00 p.m.) Alyssa Heather, Jasmine Newman-Evans, Dalton Skrove
December 25 (10:00) Karl Amundson, Irene Duba, Zachary Evenson
December 27 (8:30) Grant Erickson, Bennet Falck; (10:45) Evan Heather, Brandon Kimber

Coffee

- December 6** Tim and Carol Cowles, Rusty and Nancy Kluver, Millie Johnson
December 13 Kristin and Adam Vatter, Bob and Cora Scholz
December 20 David and Sue Rod, Bruce and Audrey Moe
December 27 People needed - contact Pat Fick.

Communion preparers

- December 6** Judy Smith, Kathy Vang
December 13 Tim and Carol Cowles
December 20 Jim and Mary Bierman
December 24 (11:00 p.m.) Tom and Gloria Porter
December 25 (10:00 a.m.) Jill and Judy Enestvedt
December 27 Jeanette and Jon Rondestvedt

Nursery

- December 6** (8:15 a.m. - noon) Dory Liem; (10:30 a.m. - noon) Connie and Todd Menssen, Dory Liem
December 13 (8:15 a.m. - noon) Dory Liem; (10:30 a.m. - noon) Saul and Amy McBroom, Dory Liem
December 20 (8:15 a.m. - noon) no nursery at first service; (10:30 a.m. - noon) Amy Willkomm
December 27 (8:15 a.m. - noon) no nursery at first service; (10:30 a.m. - noon) Julie Brehmer

Ushers

- December 6** (8:30) Doug Child, Alan Alberg, Alice Bates, Duane Benson, Len Hoffmann, Rick Hillard, Dan Lueck, Gordon Mickelsen, Sandy Whitworth, Bill Whitworth; (10:45) Wes Pearson, Brian Boyum, John Hanson, Peggy Hanson, Brandon Kimber, Dale Kimber, Don Kimber
December 13 (8:30) Bob Gelle, Jim Enestvedt, Bob Johnson, Chuck Lunder, Rob McCarthy, Ruthie Neuger, Tom Porter, Don Sahling, Myron Solid; (10:45) Jonathan Norrie, David Halsor, Dick Kleber, Todd Nichol, Kristin Nichol, Guy Reid, Jon-Erle Reid, Steve Williams
December 20 (8:30) Mark Anderson, Jim Bierman, Jerry Bothun, Dave Hagen, Sue Hagen, Nicholas Gonnerman, Patsy Ophaug, John Ophaug; (10:45) Margaret Hayford O'Leary, Bonnie Jean Flom, Lowell Johnson, Todd Iverson, Andy Langehough, Greg Norman, Doug O'Leary
December 24 (3:30 p.m.) Dallas Berg, Niles Austvold, Myron Dack, Erik Hong, Eric Lund, Mark Polzin, Bruce Rickert, Ken Wilkens; (5:00 p.m.) Corrine Heiberg, Elvin Heiberg, Tim Eklund, Lois Eklund, David Rudser, Susan Rudser, Andy Westerback; (11:00 p.m.) Margaret Hayford O'Leary, Bonnie Jean Flom, Lowell Johnson, Todd Iverson, Andy Langehough, Greg Norman, Doug O'Leary
December 25 (10:00) Mark Anderson, Jim Bierman, Jerry Bothun, Dave Hagen, Sue Hagen, Nicholas Gonnerman, Patsy Ophaug, John Ophaug
December 27 (8:30) Dallas Berg, Niles Austvold, Myron Dack, Erik Hong, Eric Lund, Mark Polzin, Bruce Rickert, Ken Wilkens; (10:45) Corrine Heiberg, Elvin Heiberg, Tim Eklund, Lois Eklund, David Rudser, Susan Rudser, Andy Westerback

News and Events

The Peace and Justice Group does not meet in December.

From the Peace and Justice group . . .

As the beginning of the liturgical year, Advent brings many of the opportunities and challenges we associate with Jan. 1. We look back to review what has happened and where we are now. We look ahead to see what needs to be done, what we should and can do. High expectations permeate the month that leads us to the celebration of the birth of Christ. Groups make year-end assessments, as well.

During the past year the Peace and Justice Group has focused on a variety of topics, from very specific issues to broader areas of fundamental responsibilities: Special Needs Children in Ukraine, Human Rights in Colombia, Global Warming, Rationing Health Care in a Pandemic, Reforming U.S. Foreign Assistance, Justice in our Court System, Nonviolence and the Beloved Community, The Stewardship of Justice, advocacy through Bread for the World, and special legislative concerns. We hosted "Growing a Culture of Peace," the Northfield Community Celebration of the International Day of Peace, in September.

Diverse as these topics are, they share a strong message: God's gift of love is for all people, not just those who are most like us. God's peace is not just the absence of war, but also the presence of justice. Similarly, God's justice is not just fairness according to society's law and order. God's justice goes beyond requirements to obey the law. Its greater concern is with doing what is right in all relationships. It means living in relationships of love and caring where the basic needs of all are met through acts of justice. Again and again God commands us to remember the poor, the outcast, the downtrodden, those who are suffering in any way, those who are rejected and abused. Jesus exhorts those who ask what they should do to be saved, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength....AND love others as much as you love yourself." (Mark 12:29-31) Recognizing and maintaining the relationship we have with one another is the heart of the Beloved Community, and central to our covenant relationship with God.

During the coming year we will continue to explore how we can deepen our covenant relationship individually and as a group. Our topics will be determined by the needs we see and where we can do something to diminish violence and strengthen the beloved community, the community of God's love.

Please join us for whatever time you can and for any issue that you care about.

Mission Statement: To mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

Websites for newsletters and information: semnsynod.org and womenoftheelca.org

Program Theme for Year: Local Connections

Dec. 12 – Saturday – 9:30 a.m. – Advent Brunch in St. John’s Hall sponsored by Women’s Breakfast Group and Miriam Circle Members. Jane Rinehart and Kathy Bolin will be the guest speakers. Kathy is the Coordinator of the Global Mission/Companion Synod Committee of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, and Jane is the chairperson of the committee. They will give highlights about the programs and the women in our companion Synod, the Central Diocese of Tanzania. While in Tanzania recently they had meetings with the diocese bishop and staff in Singida, saw the construction of the Agape Center, visited Dr. Chris Hartwig’s Palliative Care Clinic at Iambi hospital, met with the headmaster at Iambi Secondary School where St. John’s Church is sponsoring a water project, and visited St. John’s new partner congregation.

Circles

Women interested in joining a Circle, please contact Ann Ness at 645-5133 for further information and to make contacts.

Circle Bible Study Regular Meeting Times each month are the second Wednesday or Thursday at the times below:

Lydia – Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. Marilyn Boschee & Judy Smith, Leaders

Sarah – Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. Carole Nesheim, Leader

Martha/Claudia – Thurs., 9:30 a.m. Eulalie Smestad, Leader

Elizabeth – Thursday, 1:30 p.m. Darlene Hand & Iva Dodson, Leaders

Abigail/Rebecca – Thurs., 2:00 p.m. Gert Brosz, Leader

Mary – Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Rachel Stark, Leader

Miriam – Time to be decided, Cheryl Buck, Leader

Women’s Breakfast Group - second **Saturday** at 8:30 a.m. in Fireside Room, Kathy Mellstrom, Leader.

December 2009 Schedule

Dec. 7 – Noon - Bible study leaders meet in the Fireside room.

Dec. 1 & 15– 9:30 a.m. – Knitters meet in the Library.

Dec. 9 & 10 – Circles meet.

Dec. 14 & 17 – Women of the ELCA Workday for Quilting and other mission projects. Quilt preparation is the Monday before workday on Thursday at 9:00 a.m. Quilts are tied on Thursday.

Special Invitation

The women of **St. Peter’s Lutheran WELCA** invite the women of St. John’s to their evening Advent gathering on Monday, Dec. 7 at 6:30 p.m. They are hosting a dessert buffet including fruit, cheese and crackers. The speaker will be Chaplain Dianne of the Northfield Retirement Center. Jo Kleber is keeping a sign-up sheet. Also, call her if you need a ride, 645-8330.

Looking Ahead

Jan. 7 - Thursday – 11:30 – We will gather for lunch at the St. Olaf King’s Room and enjoy some music by St. Olaf students. You can sign up at the Dec. Advent Brunch, at your circle meeting in Dec., or call Jo Kleber at 645-8330 or kleberj@stolaf.edu The cost is \$9.95 plus tax and tip per person.

Adult Ministry and Education

Small Group Ministries

Providing opportunities for fellowship, Bible study, health and wellness, faith in daily living, learning, and service.

Alzheimer's/Dementia: Navigating the Pathways

Contact: Al and Lynette Marks 663-0802

Bible Study: Wisdom

Tuesdays, a.m. and p.m. (beginning Jan. 12)

Contact: Dave and Gen Quarberg 645-0089

Connections

Contact: Carol Schoen 645-6840

Dad's Time Out

Contact: Greg Kneser 663-0271

Grief Support

Contact: Barbara Knaak 664-0444

Men's Breakfast Bible Study - Food, fellowship,

Contact: Dean Ostlie 645-2597

Meets: Every other Thursday, 7:30-9:00 a.m.

New Beginning: Everyone Has a Story

Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m. (begins Jan. 6)

Contact: Phil Eaves 645-4172

Options Bible Study - Gospel of Luke

Contact: Dave and Gen Quarberg 645-0089

Peace and Justice - Informing and engaging

people of faith in issues of faith and justice

Contact: Judith Stoutland 645-7842

Meets: 2nd Monday, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Prayer and Praise, Mondays, 10:00 a.m.

Contact: Mary White 645-4783

Prayer: Nurturing Your Relationship with God,

Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m. (starts Jan. 12)

Contact: Dick Beckmen 664-3882

Tuesday Noon Bible Study

Contact: Pr. Crippen or Pr. Johnson 645-4429

Women of the ELCA Circles

Contact: Ann Ness 645-5133

Women of the ELCA Knitting

Contact: Bobbie Maakestad 645-4397

Women of the ELCA Quilting

Contact: Kathy Vang 645-4849

Women's Breakfast Group

Contact: Kathy Mellstrom 663-1451

Yoga

Contact: Patsy Ophaug 645-6231

Young Professionals' Book Group

Contact: Terrence Hassanally 612-819-0605

Longing for light, we walk in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you. Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see. Christ be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ be our light! Shine in your church gathered today. - Hymn 715, ELW, text by Bernadette Farrell

Providing small group study and fellowship opportunities

Small Groups Ministry

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

Matthew 18:20

Light and Darkness

What is it about the light of a candle that draws us to it? Is it the look of warmth, the glow, the flickering light? These days we don't rely on candles day-to-day to help us see or keep us warm; and candlelight is almost lost in the brightness of day. Yet, light just one candle in a dark room or the darkness of night and the light it provides is mesmerizing as it dances in the dark.

The coming of darkness helps us to realize how much we need the light, and when the light dispels the darkness we are brightened by it. During these Advent days, as we prepare for the coming of the light that is Christ, we light the candles, one more each week as we wait in the shadows for the Light to come. All the groups are listed on the sidebar; this month we highlight four of them.

New Group - Prayer: Nurturing Your Relationship with

God. Examine your prayer journey and explore prayer disciplines to deepen an awareness and vocation of prayer.

Resource book by same title costs \$10.00. This group will meet weekly on Tuesdays for five weeks, beginning Jan. 12 at 7:00 p.m. Contact person: Dick Beckmen, 664-3882

New Group - Alzheimer's/Dementia: Navigating the

Pathways. For those who would like to explore this topic, want to learn more, or have questions. Contacts: Alan or

Lynette Marks (663-0802-evenings) or email

lynmarks@deskmedia.com

New Topic - Bible Study Option: Wisdom.

Looking at writings in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, and Psalms. This group will meet weekly on Tuesdays for six weeks, beginning Jan. 12. Two choices of time: 10:30 a.m. or 5:30 p.m. Contacts: Dave and Gen Quarberg, 645-0089

New Beginning - Everyone Has a Story.

Hearing and telling ordinary stories which have impacted our lives. Conversation starters revolve around narrative readings and topics such as childhood memories, photos and treasured memorabilia. Meets weekly on Wednesdays for six weeks, beginning Jan. 6 at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Eaves, 645-4172

Check the Small Group Information Table in the Commons during the month of December to inquire about any of the options available.

Adult Ministry and Education

Education Opportunities for Adults on Sunday Mornings

Education Hour is at 9:45 a.m. Coffee is in the Commons between services.

The St. John's Forum meets in St. John's Hall between services.

St. John's Forum focuses on Technology and the New Testament this month. See article below.

Small Groups are part of St. John's small group ministry and meet in various rooms as noted.

Dec. 6: St. John's Forum: **New Testament: Papyrus to Print to CD**, Steve Reece, St. John's Hall.

Dec. 13: St. John's Forum: **New Testament: Papyrus to Print to CD**, Steve Reece, St. John's Hall.

Dec. 20: St. John's Forum: **New Testament: Papyrus to Print to CD**, Steve Reece, St. John's Hall.

Dec. 27: St. John's Forum: **Christmas Hymn Sing** led by John Ferguson, Sanctuary.

St. John's Forum: Technology and the New Testament

This month in St. John's Forum St. Olaf Professor of Classical Languages Steve Reece explores technology and the New Testament in a three part series. About 2,000 years ago Mark, Luke, Paul and others put reed to papyrus and composed the works that eventually made up the New Testament. Now we have the New Testament in printed, audio, and electronic forms. How did we get from there to here? Steve Reece will show remains of the earliest manuscripts of these ancient works and trace the technology that resulted in the New Testament as we have it today.

All are welcome to the St. John's Forum on Dec. 6, 13, and 20 beginning at 9:45 a.m. in St. John's Hall.

New Epiphany Large Group Bible Studies begin in January

Save the dates for new Bible study opportunities during Epiphany. On Thursday Jan. 7, 14, and 21 Pastor Crippen will lead a large group Bible study on Jesus, the Light of the world, focusing primarily on the witness of John's Gospel, but also looking throughout the New Testament. On Thursday Jan. 28, Feb. 4 and 11, Pr. Keith Homstad will lead a large group Bible study entitled "Studies in Isaiah – Considering Almah and Immanuel." Pr. Homstad will lead a presentation on the prophet known as "First Isaiah", looking at its context within the whole book of Isaiah, consider how the longest book in the Hebrew Scriptures fared when translated into the Greek Septuagint and how New Testament writers interpreted it as foreshadowing the Epiphany of Jesus Christ.

The Epiphany Bible studies will meet from 7:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. and will have a lecture format. Sign up by calling Pr. Johnson at 645-4429 ext 23 or emailing mjohnson@stjohns-elca.org.

New Offering Envelopes for 2010

The Stewardship Board has decided to implement the use of a new offering envelope system. Under the new system offering envelopes will be mailed to your home every two months. This new system makes using the offering envelopes easier and is expected to be more cost effective in the long term. The envelope packets will include envelopes for regular giving as well as special giving. If you are going to be away from your primary home address for an extended period of time and would like envelope delivery temporarily held or to have your envelopes redirected to another address please contact the church office.

Good News Gang Bowling

Twenty three 3rd – 5th graders had a great time last month bowling at Jesse James Lanes in Northfield. Thanks to Sue Brockman for chaperoning the event.

Watch for more details in January for our next event – Ice Skating!

Nursery Thank You!

Thank you to all who volunteer their time on Sunday morning to care for children during worship services! Special thanks to Amy McBroom for preparing the schedule of volunteers. It is truly appreciated!

NEW! Saturday Morning Family Time

Please join us Saturday mornings in St. John's Hall from 9:30 – 12:00 p.m. for Saturday Morning Family Time! The Hall will be open for kids to play and work off that extra energy. The first morning is **Jan. 16** and will continue every Saturday until Mar. 27. If another event is scheduled in St. John's Hall, Family Time will move to Fellowship Hall. This is a time for parents and children to play together. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Frances Boehning at 645-2961.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

Parents who wish to have their baby or child baptized at St. John's are asked to attend a preparation session to discuss the meaning of baptism and to talk about the details of the day. The next session is Saturday, Dec. 6 at 10:30 a.m. Please call the Church Office if you plan to attend.

Important Dates to Remember!

Sunday School Schedule

Dec. 6	Sunday School – <i>Advent Fair</i>
Dec. 13	Sunday School – <i>Christmas Program</i> 3:00 pm
Dec. 20	Sunday School
Dec. 27	No Sunday School – <i>Christmas Break</i>
Jan. 3	No Sunday School – <i>Christmas Break</i>

Advent Fair

Sunday, December 6
Lunch, Christmas crafts, food demonstrations,
Fair Trade Fair, fun, fun, fun!

"Second Wednesdays" meal

December 9, 5:15 – 6:15 p.m.
St. John's Hall
Everyone is welcome!

Sunday School Christmas Program

Sunday, December 14, 3:00 p.m.

Parents Night Out

Saturday, January 9, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

"DOG", Discovering Our Gifts, for grades 4 & 5

When "CAT"echism is not in session on Wed afternoons, "DOG" is! DOG, *Discovering Our Gifts*, is a time for 4th and 5th graders to learn ways of using their God-given gifts through the arts, music, service and worship!

In September and November, Kelly Lynn Stanton Nutt lead the group in two service projects, "Living on Little" and "Sewing for Service." "Living on Little" was a project where kids learned about people in need and helped decorate and pack snack bags for distribution. During "Sewing for Service", kids sewed pillows for service men and women and sewed reusable grocery bags for the Community Action Center's Food Shelf.

In December we are preparing for Christmas events. Dan Fenn, Director of Music Ministry, is teaching kids how to play the handbells for our Christmas program. We will also be making centerpieces for the Dec. 17 "Thursday's Table" meal at the CAC. If you or someone you know would like to share a service, art, drama, worship project with our 4th and 5th graders, please contact Julie Brehmer. Projects can be one Wed or a series of Wednesdays. Catechism for 4th and 5th graders will resume on Wed, Jan. 6, 2010.

YOUTH MINISTRY @ ST. JOHN'S

Senior High Sunday School

Peggy Hanson will be teaching Sunday School for our Senior High students starting on Dec. 6. She will be leading a Bible Study based on topics that are important and relevant to our high school students. Did I mention that there will be cookies? Oh yeah, she's bringing cookies. We'll be meeting downstairs in room 04, near the Youth Room. See you there!

Middle School Sunday School Line Up!

Dec. 6: Terrence Hassanally, Worship Styles
Dec. 13: Terrence Hassanally, Worship Styles
Dec. 20: Terrence Hassanally, Worship Styles
Dec. 27: No Sunday School - Christmas Break

6th Grade CAT

6th Grade CAT meets Dec. 2, from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. We'll be discussing the 2nd Petition of the Lord's Prayer, and reviewing the 1st Petition. We meet in the Fireside Room, and we will be sharing a meal together (pizza). Looking forward to seeing you there!

Christmas Books for Families and Children Available in Library

St. John's Library has many wonderful Christmas and Advent books!

Since Sunday School classes will not be visiting the library during December because of Christmas program rehearsals, books will be available for parents and children to check out. Some will be on the display wall in the library and the rest will be on the resource cart by the Sunday School classrooms.

Check out this great collection and sign out a book or two for your child to enjoy with you!

December Middle School Fellowship Event: Party!

This month, we're getting together for a Christmas Party! We'll have a White Elephant gift exchange, lots of food, and we'll play some fun games too! Friends are invited! Here are the details:

When: December 12, from 7:00pm to 9:00pm

Where: St. John's

Cost: Free! Although you do need to bring a white elephant gift.

White Elephant: This is a special gift that you bring for the gift exchange. It can be funny or thoughtful or useful or lousy. The only rule is that you shouldn't pay money to obtain this item. Its best if you find something from home that you already own.

Dec. 18 HS Event: Lock-in!

On Friday, Dec. 18, we'll be having a High School Lock-in here at St. John's. There will be games. We'll play some Christmas themed games, and also some Romans and Christians. There will be lots of food. We'll watch some movies in our new theater. We'll hold a midnight worship in the Sanctuary. It'll be loads of fun, and a great way to kick off your Winter Break! Look for details in the mail.

Julie reaches 5 years!

Congratulations to Julie Brehmer, our Director of Children's Ministry, who recently passed her five year anniversary in this position at St. John's. The congregation has been richly blessed by her service and our children have been the chief beneficiaries of her skills, dedication, and creativity. Thanks, Julie!

Pastors

Joseph G. Crippen
Mark E. Johnson
John E. Quam

Building Manager

Rich Kleeberger

Children's Ministry

Julie Brehmer

Interim Office Staff

Stephanie Aman

Stephanie Ewing

Music Ministry

Daniel Fenn

Music Staff

Jenny Pelletier - Alleluia

Cathy Rodland - Jubilate

Ruth Legvold - Laudate

Jo Dahlin - Rejoice Ringers

Parish Administrator

Shelley Keske

Parish Nurse

Lynette Marks

Shared Ministry

Regina Hassanally

Youth Ministry

Mike Sherman

Congregation President

Betsy McLaughlin



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Community Christmas Dinner at St. John's

St John's will again sponsor the annual Christmas Dinner for the community on Dec. 25, 2009, starting at 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. In the past this dinner has attracted a wide range of community members from those who have limited resources, senior citizens without family available, various members of St. John's, and



anyone who would like to come. Thus we follow in the great tradition of Jesus and our Lutheran/Christian heritage. *Everyone* is welcome to break bread with us as we celebrate the birthday of Jesus. So we invite all who do not have another place for celebrating.

We need volunteer support in various forms. We need food contributions of cooked potatoes, salads, pie or cake deserts. We also need various workers to volunteer help for serving the meal. We will have a volunteer recruitment table between services beginning on Sunday Nov. 29, 2009 or contact: Char or Bill Carlson, 507-645-9642 carlsoncharbill@msn.com or Jeanette or Jon Rondestvedt, 507-645-2733, jronlake@ties2.net.

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- **Advent Fair Dec. 6**
- On Sunday, Dec. 6, the annual
- Advent Fair festivities will happen!
- Starting at 9:30 a.m. "Mission
- Possible" gets underway. Lutheran
- World Relief and SERVV Inter-
- national Fair Trade Project provide
- handcrafts from around the world
- to sell with all proceeds going to
- artisans in developing countries.
- Coffee and chocolate will be
- available with proceeds going to
- Lutheran World Relief.
- After the second service, Advent
- Fair lunch will be served in St.
- John's Hall from 11:45 - 12:30 p.m.
- Christmas crafts and food
- demonstrations for all ages will
- follow from 12:15 - 2:15 p.m.
- downstairs in Fellowship Hall with
- coffee, cider and cookies to munch
- on! All ages are encouraged to
- come!
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