

THE VOICE

OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

December 2011

Volume 51, Number 11

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Worship Services:
8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

The *Voice* is a monthly publication of St. John's Lutheran Church, Northfield, MN. Articles for the *Voice* must be submitted by the 15th of each month:
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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.

"They Followed a Bright Star" – December 11

Mark your calendars! St. John's Children's Christmas Program will be held on Sunday, Dec. 11 in St. John's Hall. The program, "They Followed a Bright Star", a story written by Ulises Wensell, begins at 11:00 a.m. (communion will be at the 8:30 service only) and is performed by children in preschool – grade 5. Pre-service music by children in K – grade 5 begins at 10:45 a.m. If your child is unable to participate please notify his/her teacher or call Julie Brehmer at 645-4429.

We will be having an extra rehearsal for the program on Wednesday, December 7 from 6:00-6:45 p.m. in St. John's Hall. Come for the Wednesday meal and stay for rehearsal!

Advent Fair is Sunday, Dec. 4!

Are you ready to go back in time? Want to make memories you'll treasure forever? Come and experience "A Day in Bethlehem", our theme for this year's Advent Fair at St. John's. You'll taste, see and smell what daily life was like when Jesus was born. You'll find shops and activities for all ages. And, we encourage you to bring friends! The more the merrier!

When: Sunday, December 4
Time: 12:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Where: St. John's Hall
Lunch served from Noon – 1:00 p.m.

Fair Trade Fair starts in the Commons at 9:30 a.m.

Contact Julie Brehmer if you have questions at jbrehmer@stjohns-elca.org.



Christmas
Worship &
Events
at
St. John's

Sunday, Dec. 18 - Lessons and Carols
7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve
3:00 and 5:00 p.m. Christmas Vespers
11:00 p.m. Christmas Candlelight and
Communion

Sunday, 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)

Sunday, Dec. 25 - Sunday Worship
10:00 a.m. Please note that there will
be only one worship service on
December 25

**Sunday, Jan. 1 - Hymn Sing with John
Ferguson - 11:15 a.m.**

Prayer and Care Ministry

*Pray without ceasing.
1 Thessalonians 5:17*

Prayer Ministry

Gathered in the Word: Gathered in the Word: Mark the days of Advent with a time of silence and prayer, guided by Scripture. Meets Thursday, December 15 at 7 p.m. in the Fireside Room.

Prayers for healing, joys, and all concerns are offered every Sunday morning between services in the prayer chapel near the choir room on the second floor.

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.

Involuntary Simplicity

During this past stewardship season, St. John's members were engaged in a range of conversations on the topic of simplicity. These discussions helped us contemplate the context of our lives and how that context impacts the way we return our gifts to God. Simplicity is also an important discussion during the Advent and Christmas seasons as we consider the ways we can minimize such extraneous influences as shopping, decorating, and entertaining to focus on the true meaning of Christ's birth.

These conversations discuss voluntary ways to simplify our lives. But we also heard a sermon given by Pastor Iverson in October about involuntary simplicity. Based on the Gospel of Mark's account of Jesus calming the storm for the disciples, Pastor Bob spoke of how the storms of conflict and emotions in our own lives can overpower us and force us to strip away the pretensions we hide behind, bringing us face to face with what is important in

life. We might have to accept the truth of a cancer diagnosis, the loss of a job, or the death of a loved one. These events can change our lives in seconds and put us in a reality where today seems starkly different and less secure than yesterday.

In the Gospel account of the storm, Jesus was there to quiet the waters. When crisis stuns our lives, we realize the need for Jesus, but we don't necessarily find him in person, with us in the boat to calm our storm. As our faith struggles with doubt and fear, we wonder where he is. We can find ourselves dealing not only with the storm itself, but with the sometimes larger issue of keeping our hearts and spirits afloat.

...continued on pg. 4

*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*

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

Matthew 5:4

Grief Support Ministry

Grief Support Groups meeting this month include a group for parents grieving the loss of a child held at the Northfield United Methodist Church, Tuesdays Dec. 6 and 13, 7-8:30 p.m. Sherri Bunch Quaas, 645-4300. Also this month, a grief group is meeting at St. Dominic Catholic Church on Mondays Dec. 5 and 12 from 6:30 to 8p.m. Nancy Ludescher, 645-8816, ext. 203. *Coming in January – St. John's will host a grief group starting Tuesday January 3 at 7 p.m.*



The following St. John's members died in this month last year. We list them so that we can remember these loved ones and their families in prayer "with reverence and affection."

December 9, 2010
Carroll Flaten

December 23, 2010
Milton Bentson

December 29, 2010
Reidar Dittmann

From our pastors . . .

*The
Hope
and Life
We Are
Called
To*

"...so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which God has called you..."
Ephesians 1:18



A pastor of mine thought the season of Advent was a good model for Christian living year round: Think about what happens when a baby is on the way. All kinds of changes take place. Rooms get painted. Furniture is moved. Baby supplies are purchased. Some expectant parents take classes on pregnancy and parenting skills. Wills get written. Adjustments to work schedules are made. Suitcases get packed. All because something is happening. Christians, my pastor said, are called to live their lives in such a way that they point to something. As the Church we are called to live our life together in such a way that we point to what God is doing in Christ, for the sake of the world.

During Advent, to prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus and to help us look forward to the return of Jesus at the end of time, we worship, and we continue to do the work we've been called to do as we witness to the hope we've been given in the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will be led in worship by our choirs and Sunday School children. The call committee will continue its work on behalf of the congregation – as we prepare for a new time of mission and ministry together with the next senior pastor. Members of the congregation will begin meeting together this month for "Next Step Conversations" as we prepare for a new time of mission in the area of children, youth, and family ministry. And on Christmas Day we will celebrate the birth of Jesus with worship and a community dinner for all.

Around the world others are seeking to live lives that point to what God is doing in Christ. Here in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, members of Peace Lutheran Church in Eyota, MN – after meeting for nine years in the local elementary school – dedicated a new church building on November 6. The building was constructed with help from members of the ELCA Mission Builders – a group of volunteers who travel around the

country helping congregations with building projects. The church building was designed so additional space can be added in the future.

In a neighborhood in the southern part of Bogota Colombia the small Lutheran congregation called Solo Por Fe (By Faith Alone) is reaching out to local families, children, and youth. Each week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, local teachers volunteer their time providing enrichment classes to children in subjects like mathematics, music, and computer science.

Following classes the children are fed a simple meal. Older youth are brought together to learn skills like weaving, knitting, and leather working. Many of the products they make are for sale which provides additional income to these young people and their families. A number of the youth who participate are deaf. Mothers of the children and youth also attend the weekly sessions, making and teaching crafts, and sharing in fellowship. The program is thriving not only because of the lessons being taught but because of the community that exists and that has been given space to grow in this small corner of the big city.

This Advent, and always, here in Northfield, and around the world, may God give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation as we come to know the gift of the baby born in Bethlehem. So that, with the eyes of our hearts enlightened, we may know what is the hope to which God calls each of us to, and with that hope may we seek to live our life in such a way that we point to the wonderful thing God is doing in Christ. (Ephesians 1:17-18)

The blessings of Advent and Christmas,

Mark

November Actions

Memorials and Gifts

St. John's Foundation

In memory of **Noreen Benson**: by Carol Johnson, David Halsor, Ed and Rose Youngquist.

Music Fund

In memory of **Noreen Benson**: by Dan and Barbara Heilman, Jack and Charlene Romsaas, Chuck and Marilyn Jacobson, , David and Sheryl Hill, Elaine Feroe

In honor of **John Evenson**: by Brett and Karin Norgaard.

Debt Reduction

In honor of **Noreen Benson**: by Pr. John and Louise Quam, Warren Wold, Gary and Gloria Knutson, Ruth Hansen, Duane and Marlene Engstrom, Solveig Steendal, Basil and Kathy Mroz, Brynhild Rowberg, John and Patsy Ophaug, Betty Benson, Dennis and Jane Rinehart, Doreen Evans, Dean and Dorothy Ostlie, Dagfinn Moe, Kenneth Jennings, Laura Tverberg.

ELCA World Hunger Appeal

In memory of **Noreen Benson**: by Elden Zempel, Steven Neseth, Marilyn Haugen, James and Donna Moxness, Michael and Dinane Bina, Kirk and Suzanne Thompson, Lori and Rober Fendler, Robert and Donna Benson.

Other Actions

Baptisms

Audrey Katharine Dawson, daughter of Benjamin and Lacey Dawson; sponsors are David Wessel and Ashley Wessel; November 13, 2011

Weddings

Alice Bates and Larry Bates, November 26, 2011

Funerals

James Hillestad, November 8, 2011

Adeline Roadfeldt, November 18, 2011

Lee Mahachek, November 21, 2011

Radio Broadcasts

November 6, 2011, in memory of **Helen and Leon Ingram** by their family.

from the Southeastern Minnesota Synod:

by Bishop Usgaard



*Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Hallelujah, hallelujah, we're going to see the King.
(ELW #439)*

This is the anticipation of Advent. This is the promise we look forward to. This is the message that the Scriptures will proclaim in these coming weeks. The King of kings and Lord of lords is on his way. We will again celebrate that message in the birth of the babe in Bethlehem...Immanuel, God with us. But soon, very soon, we will celebrate this message as our King returns to claim all of creation, once and for all.

We live in a day where people prefer to focus not on the future but on the past. We wonder why it can't be like it used to be. Indeed there seems to be such fear of what coming days will bring. Hope seems a foreign word.

But Advent reminds us of God's promises for the day to come...good news for the poor, healing for the brokenhearted, liberty to the captives, comfort for those who mourn, strength for faint spirits. It is our King who will finally usher in such a kingdom...and we who would receive him can hardly wait.

*No more cryin' there, we are goin' to see the King,
No more dying there, we are goin' to see the King,
Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Hallelujah, hallelujah, we're going to see the King.*

Music Life and Worship Life at St. John's

Cathy Rodland in Concert

featuring St. John's Kids Choirs

Members of our Hosanna and Jubilate choirs will accompany our own Cathy Rodland in an afternoon of music of the season at Trinity Episcopal Church in Excelsior at 4 p.m. on Sunday, December 4.



Community Christmas Dinner - Music Volunteers

If you would like to play an instrument or sing a song during the Community Christmas Dinner on Sunday, December 25, please contact Dan Fenn.

Bach Cantata Study

This winter and spring, the Connections Group at St. John's will discuss, instead of a book, a musical text, J.S. Bach's Easter Cantata No. 4, "Christ lag in Todesbanden." For this cantata Bach drew upon the Reformation chorale of 1524 with text by Martin Luther. Over three sessions beginning on January 20 and concluding before Easter, we'll discuss the historical background for the cantata and experience anew Bach's profoundly spiritual interpretation of Luther's text. In advance of our meetings, we will share background materials via e-mail or in hard copy. Dan Fenn and David Sudermann are the organizers, and you may ask us to get on the list for the information packets. All are welcome, even you have not studied music theory!

Lessons and Carols - December 18

The St. John's Chorale, St. John's Singers, and Jubilate Choir will present their 3rd annual service of Lessons and Carols Sunday, December 18 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. There will be music by Stephen Paulus, Alexander Gretchaninoff, Robert Scholz, F. Melius Christiansen, and more! Invite your friends and neighbors to this special evening of worship and reflection.

...Stephen Ministry, con't. from pg. 2

As Pastor Bob said in his sermon, we (the church) are the community of faith that people often turn to when involuntary simplicity strikes. We need to be the hand that God extends to comfort and support each other in times of need. We are fortunate at St. John's to have a number of ways to comfort and encourage each other as we navigate the crises that encroach on all our lives. If you or someone you know needs support in life's struggles, please reach out to a pastor or to Stephen Minister Joan Halvorsen (645-8445).



Every year St. John's hosts the Community Christmas Dinner, a free meal for the entire community on Christmas day. This meal allows us to extend God's love to our neighbor in a tangible way on this most important day in the Christian calendar! This event is completely run and funded by St. John's volunteers. If you would like to participate by bringing a side dish, salad or dessert, delivering meals to the homebound, greeting guests, serving in the dining room, or helping in the kitchen you can sign up now. There will be a sign up table in the commons every Sunday between services and after second service from now until the week before Christmas. If you would like to contribute to the Christmas Dinner financially please write your check out to St. John's with *Christmas Dinner* in the memo line.

The Community Christmas Dinner is a wonderful time of fellowship, service, and participating in the work of God in the world. With so many ways to participate everyone is bound to find a way to be involved. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about this event please contact Director of Shared Ministries, Regina Hassanally.

Regina Hassanally
Director of Shared Ministries

SERVING TO LOVE  LOVING TO SERVE

Adult Ministry and Education

Education Opportunities for Adults on Sunday Mornings

Education Hour is at 9:45 a.m. Coffee is served in St. John's Hall

Dec. 4: *St. John's Forum: Advent Bible Study – Isaiah, Part 1, “Almah and Immanuel in the Text itself” Begins 9:50 in Sanctuary.*

Dec. 11: *St. John's Forum: Advent Bible Study – Isaiah, Part 2, “Isaiah, what's happening in his world?” Begins 9:50 in Sanctuary.*

Dec. 18: *St. John's Forum: Advent Bible Study – Isaiah, Part 3, “The Septuagint and Isaiah, the most widely read translation of the Bible in history” Begins 9:50 in Sanctuary.*

Dec. 25: *Merry Christmas! 10:00 a.m. Service only, no Forum.*

News and Events

Congregation Meeting set for Dec. 11

The Call Committee, with the agreement of your Church Council, is calling a Special Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, December 11, 2011 at 12:00 pm in the Sanctuary for the purpose of voting on the Call Committee's selected candidate to become the new Senior Pastor at St. John's Lutheran Church. We look forward to seeing you on the 11th!

We Are Blessed!!!

The Debt Reduction Appeal that St John's members have met with an amazing response has now sent over \$600,000 to Thrivent for the designated mortgage reduction. As a result the annual mortgage payment for 2012 will be almost \$58,000 less than it was before the Appeal began. If all of the pledges are paid before the end of 2012 the members of St John's will have eliminated one of the large mortgages that has bound up and limited our programs. It is clear that God has been in our midst and worked through our members to make this possible. As we move toward bringing a new Senior Pastor to St John's we will have uplifted new opportunities for the future of God's work in this place. We should all give thanks in our prayers for the progress to date.

If you were not able to pledge or contribute earlier in the year we urge you to prayerfully consider a gift before the end of December. And any amount of your pledge that you can complete before 2012 will result in saving a year of interest which is an additional contribution and brings us closer to our goal.

Sincerely in Christ
Genevieve and David Quarberg
Charlotte and Bill Carlson

The Human Face of Refugee Resettlement

You are invited to join a Sunday morning class for five weeks after the first of the year, January 8-February 5, 9:45-10:30 a.m. The first week we will study the Book of Ruth. In the succeeding weeks we will read and discuss stories of courage and hope from refugees in Minnesota, using a book entitled, "This Much I Can Tell You" published by the Minnesota Council of Churches Refugee Services. If you are interested contact Dick Dahlin, 645-5978 or e-mail jodick5@charter.net. Books will be ordered for you at a cost of \$16.00.

Poinsettia Sale!



The chancel guild will be selling poinsettias between services beginning on Sunday, Dec. 4. Please contact a member of the chancel guild for more information.

Thank you to everyone who made Meals on Wheels deliveries this fall! As part of this outreach ministry, St. John's delivered more than 100 meals to members of our community!

Early Deadline for the Voice!

With the holiday season upon us and a need to keep communication flowing - the deadline for the January Voice is EARLY! The deadline for January's Voice is Friday, December 9. Please get submissions in by deadline - if articles are not in, they will not appear in the January Voice. Thanks for your help and cooperation!

Annual Meeting Reports

For all those that are submitting information for the Annual Report - the due date for reports is Thursday, December 29. Please get the reports in on time!

Serving on Sundays in December

Acolytes

- Dec. 4** (8:30) Ashley Canedy, Emma Iverson; (11:00) Griffin Rod, Nic Zabel
Dec. 11 (8:30) Ellie Ims, Elizabeth Evenson; (11:00) Brandon Kimber, Evan Heather
Dec. 18 (8:30) Bergen Hoff, Elsa Hoff; (11:00) Jacob Gonnerman, Cameron Beedle
Dec. 24 Acolytes To Be Determined
Dec. 25 Acolytes To Be Determined

Communion preparers

- Dec. 4** Karen and Dale Schuette
Dec. 11 Rae and Wes Pearson
Dec. 18 Marie and Duane Benson

Nursery

- Dec. 4** (8:30) Claire Weiss; (11:00) Connie Menssen
Dec. 11 (8:30 & 11:00) Claire Weiss
Dec. 18 (8:30) Claire Weiss; (11:00) Amy Willkomm
Dec. 25 Volunteer Needed - Can you help?

Counters

Jim Enestvedt, Dick Dahlin, Terrence Hassanally

Ushers

- Dec. 4** (8:30) Doug Child, Alan Alberg, Duane Benson, Len Hoffmann, Rick Hillard, Loren Lee, Dan Lueck, Gordon Mickelsen; (11:00) Wes Pearson, Brian Boyum, John Hanson, Peggy Hanson, Brandon Kimber, Dale Kimber
Dec. 11 (8:30) Dan Franklin, Jim Enestvedt, Bob Johnson, Chuck Lunder, Rob McCarthy, Brent Mueller, Ruthie Neuger, Tom Porter, Don Sahling, Myron Solid; (11:00) Jonathan Norrie, Zachary Bahler, Andrew Dell, Terry Dell, David Halsor, Dick Kleber, Kristin Nichol, Michael Sylvester, Suzanne Sylvester, Steve Williams
Dec. 18 (8:30) Mark Anderson, Jim Bierman, Jerry Bothun, Dave Hagen, Sue Hagen, Nicholas Gonnerman, Patsy Ophaug, John Ophaug; (11:00) Margaret Hayford O'Leary, Bonnie Jean Flom, Todd Iverson, Lowell Johnson, Andy Langehough, Greg Norman, Doug O'Leary
Dec. 24 (3:00) Jonathan Norrie, Zachary Bahler, Andrew Dell, Terry Dell, David Halsor, Dick Kleber, Kristin Nichol, Michael Sylvester, Suzanne Sylvester, Steve Williams; (5:00) Margaret Hayford O'Leary, Bonnie Jean Flom, Todd Iverson, Lowell Johnson, Andy Langehough, Greg Norman, Doug O'Leary (11:00) Corrine Heiberg, Elvin Heiberg, Tim Eklund, Lois Eklund, David Rudser, Susan Rudser, Andy Westerback
Dec. 25 (10:00) Dallas Berg, Niles Austvold, Myron Dack, Erik Hong, Eric Lund, Mark Polzin, Bruce Rickert, Ken Wilkens

"Next Steps" in Children, Youth and Family Ministry

One of the Core Values that came out of the Vision Meetings last fall was the importance of Youth and Family Ministry. As we look at prayerfully moving forward in this process, we need to ask ourselves some important questions.

1. What does it look like when St. John's is living into its core values?
2. What should young people experience in their Faith Journey while at St. John's?
3. What might success look like here? What are the barriers that keep us from being who God is calling us to be?

On December 6, Pete Erickson of Interserve Ministries will be joining the staff and key leaders to look at these questions and start formulating a plan to keep moving forward. In January, there will be three (3) 'Next Step' meetings that will give parents and the congregation an opportunity to examine the questions and provide input to help develop a plan and to move forward. All of the information gathered will be given to the transition team who will put together Goals and a Vision of where to move to in the future.

What can I do right now? 1. Please keep the Children, Youth and Family ministries in your prayers. Pray for wisdom and faith as the process moves forward. 2. Keep your eyes and ears open for the "next step" meetings coming in January. We will need your input to move forward.

Interim Director of Youth Ministry - Hours

The Interim Director of Youth Ministry position is only 20 hours a week. Tracie Peterson is in Northfield on Tuesdays and Wednesdays as well as 2 Sundays a month. The best way to reach her is via e-mail: (youthministry.stjohns@gmail.com or call her on office days. Phone calls will be returned Tuesday afternoon if you leave a message over the weekend.



St. John's Suppers

Wednesday night supper just got a little easier! Come, share a meal! All are welcome, it's a fantastic time for fellowship for ALL ages!

Supper is served from 5:15 p.m. - 6:15 p.m. in St. John's Hall.

December 7
Pizza

December 14
Scalloped Potatoes with Ham

December 21
No Meal

December 28
No Meal

Thank You!

Thank you to the many people who were a part of the 240 people attending the Palestinian dinner which will benefit the Bright Stars (Dar al Kalima School) program in Bethlehem. We are sorry we could not accommodate those who requested tickets after the limit was reached. If you were unable to make it and would like more information about the the Lutheran School, please contact Ruth Hansen at 534-8228.

Mission Outreach

Feed My Starving Children Update

Last month, members of St. John's joined other members of the community to help prepare 52,920 simple meals to be distributed through Feed My Starving Children. Thank you!

CROP Hunger Walk Update

This fall's Northfield CROP Hunger Walk raised nearly \$36,000. That means the local Community Action Center will receive approximately \$9000 to aid our neighbors in need in Northfield and some \$27000 will be given to hunger-fighting efforts around the world through the work of Church World Service organizations.

Chicago Mission Trip 2011

Thirteen members of St. John's travelled to Chicago in July to participate in a week-long mission trip organized through the Center for Student Missions. Among a busy week of activities and events, youth and chaperones assisted teachers in a summer school program run by an organization called Casa Central; served at a homeless shelter called A Safe Haven, and helped to serve a free meal called "Breaking Bread" at the LaSalle Street Church. Here are two more reflections from the mission trip.

From Mike DeCramer: I would say the person I saw God in was the teacher I worked with at Casa Central. She had a hard job keeping an eye on 20 or more kids. No matter what, she remained calm. For instance, at the water park one day, a child in my group took off when I wasn't paying attention for a moment. I told her right away and she just told me to go look for him. She went back to her job as if nothing happened. A few minutes later we found the child and I came back and told her and she was thankful for that. She was very caring for everyone and I could see that she enjoyed working with the children.

From Adam Neuger: Although the Chicago mission trip this past summer was a great time for our church's youth to bond while helping others and spreading the word of Christ, I took away something far more meaningful from the experience than just a good time. Our first day at Casa Central our instructor told my group that we would be with the older kids and they may take a while to warm up to us. Within seconds of walking into their classroom Peter Duba and I

Community Christmas Dinner



This month's Hands and Feet 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 of the Voice for more information. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Christ in the world!

were asked to go get ice with two of the students in the class. The teacher asked for volunteers and everyone's hand shot up at once. She selected two young boys who seemed to be good friends and sent us on our way. Before we had a chance to introduce ourselves the boys were asking all sorts of questions about how we were doing, if there was anything we could do to help, also they were joking around, poking fun at us, and dragging us along by our arms as if we were old friends. This experience showed me that God is everywhere, although these boys may not have a proclaimed faith, they were true Christians; strangers walked into a foreign place filled with people they didn't know and the boys didn't hesitate to welcome them in and share in their wealth of joy. They treated us as old friends offering to help with anything and everything and introducing us to all of their friends. I think that by attending the program at Casa Central, which had new volunteer helpers each week, these students were learning the skills to make friends quickly and to be open and welcoming to all.

News and Events

The Peace and Justice Group does not meet during December.

From the Peace and Justice group . . .

Rick Steves: I'm speaking out for poor people. Will you join me?

I believe that the mark of a civilized society is how it cares for its needy, its homeless and its hungry people. I also believe that there's enough wealth in our society to foster culture, steward our environment, and strive for the ideal that all of our children – regardless of the economic class of their parents – are equally entitled to quality education and health care.

And I believe that while we are a compassionate and caring people, a false austerity is being imposed upon all of us, and we do not need to accept it.

In my travels I've learned that even if you're motivated only by greed, if you know that's good for you, you don't want to be filthy rich in a desperately poor society. It's just not a pretty picture.

As a caring citizen of the united States and as a Christian who believes it is Christ-like to stand up for poor people and pound swords into plowshares, I'll be joining my friends from Bread for the World

From a Bread Blog 11/16/11

Current information at www.bread.org

Stiring things up in Advent

December is a very busy month ! Do we need to be encouraged to do even more than our schedules and commitments have already jammed on to our calendars?

Here's a quick review of the focus for each Sunday in Advent that may help us put all our activities into perspective by specifying what is to be stirred up and what the goal of the stirring is.

On the first Sunday in Advent, the prayer for the day begins "Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice...."

The next Sunday's prayer begins "Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace...."

On the third Sunday the prayer is to Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way...."

The prayer of the fourth Sunday returns to repeats "Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we receive your promises..."

Maybe such stirrings and the thoughts and choices they encourage will help calm overloaded calendars !



Mission Statement:

**TO MOBILIZE WOMEN TO ACT BOLDLY
ON THEIR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST**

Lutheran Woman Today Bible study theme for 2010-2011 is

"The People of God:

Unity in the Midst of Diversity"

Amos 3:3 "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

For newsletters and information: www.semnsynod.org and www.womenoftheelca.org

Dec. 10 - Saturday, 9:30 a.m. in St. John's Hall. The Women's Breakfast Group is sponsoring an **Advent Brunch**. Program: Music, song and worship with "The Four Friends" (Ruth Legvold, Myrna Johnson, Leslie Lykins, David Miller.)

Circles meet the second week of each month (the week following the first Thursday of the month.) Note exceptions below. Women interested in joining a circle can contact Barbara Walters at 663-1055.

For a subscription to the LWT magazine, please email: subscriptions@augsbuorgfortress.org or ask one of the circle leaders for information.

Dec. 5 -- Monday, Bible study leaders meet at 12:00 noon in Fireside Room.

Dec. 6 and 20 -- Knitters meet either in homes or in St. John's library. Call Kathy Vang for location --- 645-4849

Dec. 7, 8, 9, 10, 15 -- Circles meet.

Dec. 12 and 15 -- Quilters meet in Fellowship Hall from 9 -- 11 a.m.

Dec. 29 -- WELCA Executive Board meets at 9:30 a.m. in Fireside Room.

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

Anna - 7:00 p.m. Third Thursday at Fireside Room, Susan Rudser, leader.

Abigail / Rebecca - Thursday, 2:00 p.m. Gert Broz, leader. Meet at NRC - Parkview East.

Elizabeth - Thursday, 1:30 p.m., Marie Benson and Gretchen Hardgrove, leaders.

Lydia - Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. Marilyn Boschee and Judy Smith, leaders.

Martha / Claudia - Thursday, 9:30 a.m. Marilyn Jacobson and Joyce Schrader, leaders.

Mary - 2nd Friday, 1:00 p.m. Rachel Stark, leader.

Sarah - Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. Char Nelson, leader.

Women's Breakfast Group - 2nd Saturday at 8:30 a.m. Kathy Mellstrom, leader. Meet in Fireside Room.

Looking Ahead

Dec. 5 - Sarah and Martha / Claudia circle members are planning and will present a birthday party with a program and refreshments, for the residents at NRC.

Jan. 5 - Thursday 11:30 a.m. Lunch at the St. Olaf Kings' Room with a Christmas Carol sing, led by Carol Benson and friends.

Please submit items for this information page to Marilyn Jacobson at cemja@charter.net or Marilyn Haugen at rhhmsh@charter.net.

WELCA is collecting used cell phones to support Ruth's House in Faribault. Ruth's House mission is to help women and children in recovery from violence, oppression, and homelessness -- providing affordable housing in a safe, supportive and healing environment as a transition into a new beginning. Please drop off your used cell phones in the box provided in the Commons.



Small Groups Ministry

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

Matthew 18:20

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

Bible Study Options

Contact: *Dave and Gen Quarberg* 645-6840

Connections

Contact: *Carol Schoen* 645-6840

Gathered in the Word

Contact: *Pr. Johnson* 645-4429

Grief Support

Contact: *Barbara Knaak* 664-0444

Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Contact: *Dean Ostlie* 645-2597

Men's Time Out

Contact: *Greg Kneser* 663-0271

Peace and Justice

Contact: *Judith Stoutland* 645-7842

Prayer and Praise

Contact: *Mary White* 645-4783

Tuesday Noon Bible Study

Contact: *Pr. Bob or Pr. Mark* 645-4429

Women of the ELCA Circles

Contact: *Barbara Walters* 663-1055

Women of the ELCA Knitting

Contact: *Bobbie Maakestad* 645-4397

Women's Bible Study at Parkview West

Contact: *Dick Dahlin* 645-5978

Women of the ELCA Quilting

Contact: *Kathy Vang* 645-4849

Women's Breakfast Group

Contact: *Kathy Mellstrom* 663-1451

If you are interested in leading a small group or have a suggestion for a new small group please contact a member of the Small Group Leadership Team:

Sandi Gerdes 645-2290,
sandi@laurabaker.org

Cheryl Buck, 663-9056,
cbuck@charter.net

Barb Eaves, 645-4172,
pbeaves@hotmail.com

Mark Johnson, 645-4429
mjohnson@stjohns-elca.org

Graces Comes....

By Barbara Eaves

As we prepare to hear the Christmas story again, I am reminded of the delightful annual Christmas program at a small-town church to which we once belonged. One of the unique features of this Christmas pageant was a large tin star which was affixed to a cable strung from the back balcony to the chancel. With the use of a hand crank the star could move.

The Christmas program would begin and the story would unfold with children taking all the traditional roles and everyone singing the Christmas carols. When the time came for the three wise men to enter, the trio, dressed in all their finery, made their way slowly down the aisle toward the manger, being led by the star. To the audience it looked and sounded something like this: "At the time of King Herod," ...*creak, creak...* "after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea"....*creak, creak, creak...* "wise men from the East came" ...*creak, creak...* "...There ahead of them" ...*creak, creak, creak* ... "went the star"....*creak*. Sometimes the star would get stuck and have to be rewound a short distance before it could be moved forward again, but eventually it made its way to the manger.

In reflecting on what makes this pageant so memorable with it's squeaky, halting star, I think that it exemplifies real life which is not certain, not perfect, and often seems to move forward two steps and back three. And yet, in the midst of the ordinary and in spite of our imperfections, God's grace always makes its way into our lives.

Small Group Events Coming Up

December

Fri, Dec 2

Movie Night, 7:15 pm, St. John's Theater (upper level), featuring, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, with Gregory Peck. All are welcome.

Sat, Dec 10

Connections Christmas Party, 7:30pm at the home of Jon & Guynell Reid. Bring a treat to share, sing Christmas carols, and enjoy fellowship. All are welcome.

Sunday mornings

January

Human Face of Resettlement, 9:45-10:45, Room 203 (upper level). Read and discuss stories of refugees who have settled in the Twin Cities and learn of the suffering and courage of refugees around the world. Leader: Dick Dahlin

February

Mission Partner News, 9:45-10:45 Theater Room (upper level). Hear reports and view slides from those who have recently visited our partner churches in Tanzania and Colombia. Learn about the ELCA's Companion Synod Program.

J.S. Bach's Easter Cantata No. 4, "Christ lag in Todesbanden"

Fridays, Jan. 20, Feb. 17, Mar 16 (or 23) 7:30 pm (sessions may be held at church)

Connections invites all who are interested to participate in the discussion of the cantata's musical text by Bach and chorale text by Martin Luther. Organizers are Dan Fenn and David Sudermann. To receive a background packet, write dsudermann@charter.net.

Lenten Book Conversations - more info coming soon!

Important Dates to Remember!

Sunday School Schedule

Dec. 4 Sunday School – *Advent Fair*
 Dec. 11 Sunday School – *Christmas Program*
 11:00 a.m.
 Dec. 18 Sunday School
 Dec. 25 No Sunday School – *Christmas Break*
 Jan. 1 No Sunday School – *Happy New Year!*

Advent Fair

Sunday, December 4
 "A Day In Bethlehem", Noon – 2:30 p.m.
 Fair Trade Fair starts at 9:30 a.m.

Sunday School Christmas Program Rehearsal (K-5)

Wednesday, Dec. 7, 6:00 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. in St. John's Hall

Sunday School Christmas Program

Sunday, Dec. 11, 11:00 a.m.
 Pre-service music starts at 10:45 p.m.

Christmas Break

No Wednesday programming on Dec. 28!
 No Sunday School on Dec. 25 and Jan. 1

4th and 5th Grade CATEchism resumes Wed. Jan. 4

Catechism for 4th and 5th graders

CAT will resume on Wednesday, **January 5!** CAT classes meet downstairs, 4th grade in Fellowship Hall and 5th grade in the Youth Room from 4:00 – 4:45 p.m. Let me know if your child would like to ride the Wednesday afterschool bus to CAT!

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. Baptism preparation is held on the first Saturday of each month in the Fireside Room. The next session is Saturday, December 3 at 10:30 a.m. Please call the Church Office if you plan to attend.



Christmas Books Available

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 display in the library and others will be downstairs by the Nursery. Check out this great collection and sign out a book or two for your child to enjoy with you.

Nursery Thank You!

Thank you to all the wonderful parents who volunteer their time on Sunday morning to care for children in the Nursery during worship services! Special thank to Amy McBroom for preparing the schedule of volunteers and to our work study student, Claire Weiss. It is truly appreciated!

Hey Kids!
Watch for details in the
January Voice about the
upcoming "PJ and Movie
Morning" event on
Monday, January 23!
(NO SCHOOL DAY!)

YOUTH MINISTRY @ ST. JOHN'S

Middle School Sunday School

Way to Live: Grades 6-8

The month of December was a great chance for us to look at food. We talked about where our food come from, hunger and what is Jesus calling us to do concerning hunger. Here is a schedule for the month of December

12/4 Advent Adventure

12/11 Creativity

12/18 Creativity

No Sunday school 12/25 & 1/1 due to Winter Break. Merry Christmas!

High School Sunday School

Faith Lens: Grades 9-12

Faith Lens is a chance for our youth to take a look at today's headlines and see how the gospel for today may speak to them. Each week the group tackles a new article straight out of the newspapers. Check it out at <http://blogs.elca.org/faithlens/>

Mall Hunt - MS/HS Event!

Who: All youth grades 6-12

When: Wednesday, December 28th

5:30pm - 8pm

Where: Burnsville Mall

Cost: Bring money for a treat if you so choose

Join us for an evening of fun at the Burnsville Mall. We will meet at St. Johns at 5:30pm. Before we leave, you will be given a packet of pictures. Your goal is to find the people in the photos at the mall and have them autograph their photos. All pictures will be members of St. Johns. After the search is over, we will be meeting at the food court to have ice cream or some kind of treat. Bring money for your own treats and I look forward to seeing you there.

6th grade CAT

Your next meeting is Wednesday, December 7th with Pastor Bob. You will be taking a look at the 2nd Petition of the Lord's prayer. Don't forget your Catechism. See you there!

Ghost Stories & Pizza Party

We had a great turn out for our St. Olaf Event! Twenty-one Youth and adults gathered to hear the tales of St. Olaf and its "residents" both past and current. A huge thank you to Greg Kneiser for leading the group. Thanks to Brian Evenson, Jeff Gunn, Hannah Marti and Julie Brehmer for your assistance. It was a great night.

St. John's at the CAC

A big part of the fun with Christmas is wrapping and giving presents! We will be looking for individuals who are willing to help wrap packages for families who are unable to afford presents. Watch your e-mail, the bulletin and snail mail for dates and times. Remember, this can also count towards your Hands and Feet Requirements!

Volunteer Opportunities

Mall Hunt: We are in need of drivers and "hidiers" for this event. Please contact Tracie Peterson if you can help!

Data Entry: Tracie would like to send out a quarterly statement to all confirmation students, letting them know where they stand with Sermon Notes, Hands & Feet Project, and acolyting. If you have some extra time and are good with the computer, contact Tracie: youthministry.stjohns@gmail.com

Can you help **provide donuts or other snacks** for the Sunday School Hour? Tracie can place the order if you can pick them up.

Sunday Morning Small group Leaders:

We are looking for a few individuals who are willing to help on an occasional basis. Ideally, it would be nice to have 2-3 extra hands each Sunday Morning. You would receive the lesson earlier in the week so you know what will be discussed.

Way to Live Leaders: Presenters needed starting in January! If you are interested in helping in this way, Tracie will send you a list of topics - choose the one that interests you!

Pastors

Bob Iverson
 Mark Johnson
 John Quam

Building Security

Rich Kleeberger

Children's Ministry

Julie Brehmer

Music Ministry

Daniel Fenn

Music Staff

Tyler Forsythe - Alleluia
 Cathy Rodland - Jubilate
 Ruth Legvold - Laudate
 Jo Dahlin - Rejoice Ringers

Office Manager

Stephanie Aman

Parish Nurse

Lynette Marks

Shared Ministry

Regina Hassanally

Youth Ministry

Tracie Peterson

Congregation President

Carrie Duba



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Community Christmas Dinner

St. John's will again host the annual Community Christmas Dinner. This dinner, served from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Christmas Day, attracts members from all parts of St. John's and the Northfield community. The dinner is free and open to all. This event offers the community of St. John's an opportunity to extend God's love in a meaningful and tangible way. As we offer a meal to those who come through our doors we follow in the teachings of Jesus and the traditions of the Christian church.

We need volunteer support in various forms. We need food contributions of cooked potatoes, salads, pies or cakes. We also need various workers to volunteer help for serving and cleaning up after the meal. There will be a sign up for all volunteer opportunities in the Commons beginning Sunday, November 27th or contact: Char or Bill Carlson, 507-645-9642 carlsoncharbill@msn.com or Jeanette or Jon Rondestvedt, 507-645-2733, ironlake@ties2.net or Regina Hassanally, 507-645-4429, reginah@stjohns-elca.org.

The Giving Tree, Nov. 27 – Dec, 5

The annual "Giving Tree" program sponsored by the Northfield Community Action Center will be set up in the Commons until December 4. The Giving Tree is decorated with paper stars. Each star has a gift idea, along with the

name, age and gender of a child whose family is unable to purchase Christmas gifts this year.

Purchased gifts should be placed, unwrapped, with the paper star attached, and put under the tree by Sunday, Dec. 4. In addition, we will also



offer gifts to our Companion Synods in Columbia and Tanzania. The tree will be decorated with 50 envelopes for making donations to Lutheran Schools in these Synods. Thank you in advance for your donations!