

# THE VOICE

OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Extending God's Love

December 2013

Volume 53, Number 11

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inside...*

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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,  
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[office@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:office@stjohnsnorthfield.org).

For information, contact  
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[www.stjohnsnorthfield.org](http://www.stjohnsnorthfield.org)

**Church Office hours:**

**Monday - Thursday**

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 Giving Tree, November 17 - December 6

The annual "Giving Tree" program sponsored by the Northfield Community Action Center will be set up in the Commons until December 6. 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 Friday, December 6. 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!



## Christmas Worship & Events at St. John's

**Sunday, Dec. 22** – Lessons and Carols at both services

**Tuesday, Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve**

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

11:00 p.m. Christmas Candlelight and Holy Communion

**Wednesday, Dec. 25 – Christmas Day**

10:00 a.m. Festive Christmas Eucharist

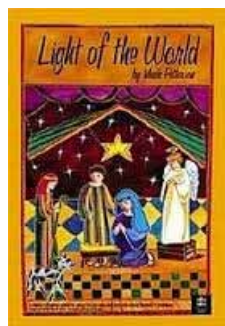
11:30 a.m. Christmas Dinner for All  
(see page 11 for more information)

**Sunday, Dec. 29 - Sunday Worship**

10:00 a.m. Please note that there will be only one worship service on December 29

11:30 a.m. Christmas Hymn-Sing with John Ferguson

## St. John's Children's Christmas Program Sunday, December 15



Mark your calendars! St. John's Children's Christmas Program will be held on Sunday, December 15 in St. John's Hall. The program, "Light of the World", a musical written by Mark Patterson, begins at 11:00 a.m. 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 contact Julie Brehmer at 645-4429 or [children@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:children@stjohnsnorthfield.org).

Our Mission: *As followers of Jesus Christ, the members of St. John's Lutheran Church welcome all people to join us in celebrating God's grace, nurturing their faith, and reaching out to the world in love and service.*

# Prayer and Care Ministry

*Pray without ceasing.  
1 Thessalonians 5:17*

## Prayer Ministry

**Gathered in the Word:** Mark the season of Advent with a time of prayer guided by scripture, Thursday, December 19, at 4:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room. All are welcome.

**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.

*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*

## Saying No

Along with the ABCs of the season (Advent, bells, and choirs of angels) comes the G (guilt). Catalogs arrive relentlessly, charities pull at your heart, children drop off lists, and too many December dates are double-booked. You wake up in the middle of the night and worry about flights, credit cards, and menus. You just can't do it all. Where, oh where, is the "peace on earth" those choirs of angels sing about?

Stephen Ministers are trained to offer support for making tough choices—and learning to say "no." Holiday expectations can feel overwhelming, especially if a family crisis has raised the stress level already. As hard as it can be to turn down a request, remember that your day, like everyone else's, has exactly 24 hours. No one can do it all. Take time to set priorities that match your family's values, budget, and style—and then stick to them. Remember that, saying "no" to one thing is often a way to say "yes" to something else—and G also stands for grace!

If you or someone you know could benefit from the care and support of a Stephen Minister, please call one of the pastors or Joan Halvorson at 645-8445.

### **Yes for No**

- Say no to answering the phone while the family opens an Advent calendar door, and say yes to hearing a child's excited prayer.
- Say no to first-in-line shopping at the toy store, and say yes to a breakfast conversation about favorite Christmas carols.
- Say no to driving kids to a hayride, and say yes to driving a neighbor to the doctor.
- Say no to a late night gathering, and say yes to staying healthy.

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

*Matthew 5:4*

## Grief Support Ministry

**Northfield Grief Support Coalition:** A grief support group meets at the Northfield United Methodist Church this month for parents grieving the loss of a child – December 3, 10 from 6:30- 8:00. Contact Sherri Bunch-Quaas, 645-4300, for more information.

All are invited to the First United Church of Christ for the "The Longest Night" celebration on Saturday, December 21 at 7 p.m.

**Grief Care Resource:** Grief Resources are available for all in the Commons or by contacting one of the pastors.



*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 14, 2012  
**Ken Wilkens**

# From our pastors . . .

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*"...come,  
let us  
walk  
in the  
light  
of the*

*LORD!"*

*Isaiah 2:5*

For almost eleven years we have shared ministry together at St. John's. It has been a privilege and joy to serve as one of your pastors. Thank you for the kindness and encouragement you have shown to me. Your faith and your dedication to the ministry of St. John's and to the ministry of the larger church have inspired me. Through the Holy Spirit, you have helped to deepen my faith in Christ – as you have done and continue to do for others in this community and in other places around the world.

According to Synod protocol, my participation in the recent call process for senior pastor means that I must submit my resignation at some point after a new senior pastor is called. My departure at the end of December will help provide a period of time and space for the congregation to prepare for Pastor Fickenscher's arrival. It will also mark the beginning of a time of discernment for me as I explore new ministry opportunities.

As members of the body of Christ, we go forward in the promise of God's blessing and with trust in God's Word, as Paul did, "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6)

Blessings as you continue the good work of extending God's love in Christ.

Peace,



## Advent...

The first Sunday in December marks the beginning of the season of Advent, and the beginning of the new church year. Together in worship during these weeks we will be encouraged to be watchful and repentant, open to renewal in faith and hope as we look forward to celebrating Christmas, the coming of the Christ Child! Other events at St. John's, including the Advent Fair, the Service of Lessons and Carols, and the Sunday School Christmas program celebrate the season as well, and prepare us for the coming of Emmanuel.

My time as Interim Senior Pastor will conclude at the end of December. I am grateful for the privilege of being a part of the ministry of St. John's the past fourteen months. Thank you for your kind support, encouragement, and prayers. I am confident that Pastor Pam Fickenscher will have a wonderful beginning in her ministry here as you welcome and support her in the gracious spirit of St. John's! May God's grace and peace be with you all this Advent/ Christmas season and through the coming year of promise!

Pastor Mandsager

# *Music and Worship Life at St. John's*

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## **O Come, O come, Emmanuel... ...and ransom captive Israel...**

This is how our memory hymn for December begins. We will sing the refrain every Sunday as we light the Advent candles.

...and ransom...

...what does this mean?...

...is this too complicated a concept for young people to grasp?

I have a friend in Florida who sends his sermons to me every week. Last month, the church he serves, First Presbyterian, Tallahassee used the new Presbyterian Hymnal, *Glory to God*, for the first time, and his sermon revolved around the significance of hymns in the lives of Christians.

Addressing the issue of texts some consider too complicated for young people he observed:

“Hymns take root in our souls even before we have cognitive ability to exegete and analyze. You could say that we sing before we comprehend... We sing not only because we have faith. We sing in order to have faith.”

I don't know about you, but for me the concept of the Incarnation – Christ, born to ransom us, free us from our sins, is so profound that it still amazes me. I've been working at understanding the great, good news of Christ's birth, death and rising again since I first sang *O Come, O come, Emmanuel* many, many years ago.

May we all “ponder anew what the Almighty can do” (from our September memory hymn – *Praise to the Lord*) as we again observe the season of Advent in preparation for the news of Christmas - “God and sinners reconciled.” (*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.*)

A blessed Advent and Christmastide to all.

John Ferguson  
Interim Director of Music

## **Youth Recital Announcement**

**The Sunday Morning Concert Series** will feature a **Youth Recital** that will take place between the church services in the Sanctuary on **Sunday, February 9, 2014**. Performance areas include voice, woodwinds, brass, strings, percussion, harp, piano, and organ. Accompanists will be provided.

High school and middle school youth wishing to present a solo or perform in a previously formed small ensemble (duet, trio, or quartet) should contact Jo Ann Polley, recital coordinator, at Polley@stolaf.edu **at this time** to indicate your interest. Recital slots tend to fill quickly.

**The deadline for submitting final recital information (performer(s), instrument or voice, grade, title, composer, composition length, and accompanist need) to the recital coordinator via E-mail, and for turning in a copy of the piano accompaniment with your name on it to the Church Office is Wednesday, January 8, 2014.**

## **Calling All Laudate Alumni**

All Laudate Alumni and their friends and families are again invited to join present Laudate members to sing for the 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. New this year is a time for rehearsal and fellowship the evening before Christmas Eve, Monday, December 23. The Monday rehearsal will be at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary and will include bell ringing and processing for all that want to sing and ring. After rehearsal will be a time for fellowship and goodies, hosted by the Worship and Arts Board, in the Commons. For those that cannot come to the Monday rehearsal, we will have a quick run-through of all the music at 10:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve.



# Shared Ministry

## Christmas Dinner

Once again St. John's will host the Community Christmas Dinner. This holiday meal is free . . . open to the entire community . . . and is served from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Christmas Day.

As in the past, we ask members of the congregation for their help in making this dinner a success. Help is needed in the following areas:

- Food: potato casseroles; fruit and green salads; desserts
- Kitchen: food preparation; brewing coffee; washing dishes; etc.
- Dining Area: set-up; clean-up; pour coffee and milk; serve deserts; etc.
- Miscellaneous: greet; pour punch; assist diners; etc.

Sign-ups begin Sunday, December 1, in the Commons and extend thru Sunday, December 22. Look over the many possibilities to volunteer and help make this dinner a success once again.

## Wednesday Night Meals

We are in need of more volunteers to help with clean up and making desserts for the Wednesday Night Meals in December. Please take the time to sign up to volunteer on the board outside of the Church Office or email [sharedministry@stjohnsnorthfield.com](mailto:sharedministry@stjohnsnorthfield.com). Any help is greatly appreciated!

Joanne Sommers  
Shared Ministries Coordinator  
[sharedministry@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:sharedministry@stjohnsnorthfield.org)

*SERVING TO LOVE*  *LOVING TO SERVE*

*Welcome to St. John's!*

### ***We welcomed the following new members on November 24th!***

(If you would like contact information please contact the Church Office at 645-4429 or [office@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:office@stjohnsnorthfield.org))

Joann Bell  
Hosts: Jon and Jeanette Rondestvedt

Ivy Newman,  
Mitchell  
Hosts: Dick and Jo Dahlin

Robert and Deborah Seitz,  
Nathan, Hannah  
Host: Eldora Seitz

Justin and Keri Craig,  
Lexi  
Hosts: Olaf and Christy Hall-Holt

John and Keri Peterson,  
Joran and Emmett  
Hosts: Gary and Gloria Knutson

Sharon Sherman-Akre  
Host: Robert Flaten

Mary Hoff  
Hosts: Bryan and Andrea Hoff

Rob Quanbeck and Dawn Tommerdahl  
Hosts: Dagfinn and Lydia Moe

## **PJs, Breakfast and Movie Morning**

Our next movie morning is during Christmas Break! Kids 5th grade and younger are invited to come in their pajamas to movie morning. Come for breakfast and watch a movie in St. John's Theater.

Feel free to bring friends!

**Where:** The Commons for Breakfast, Movie in St. John's Theater

**When:** Friday, January 3

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Children younger than kindergarten need to be accompanied by a parent. Sign up on the bulletin board in the Commons or call Julie at 645-4429.

## **Kids! Would you like to be part of the Sunday School Christmas Program Prelude Music?**

Sunday school children are welcome to participate in the prelude music for the Sunday School Christmas program on December 15. We welcome solos or ensembles, short instrumental or vocal pieces. The prelude begins at 10:45 a.m. before the 11:00 a.m. Sunday school program. Please sign-up in the Commons or give Julie Brehmer a call at 645-4429, if you are interested in participating.

## **Catechism for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders will resume in February**

CAT classes meet downstairs, 4<sup>th</sup> grade in Room 9 and 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the Youth Room from 4:00 – 4:45 p.m. Let Julie Brehmer know if your child would like to ride the Wednesday afterschool bus to CAT!

### ***Important Dates to Remember!***

#### **Sunday School Schedule**

December 1 No Sunday School – Thanksgiving Break

December 8 Sunday School

December 15 Sunday School – *Christmas Program*  
*11:00 a.m. Worship Service*

December 22 No Sunday School – *Christmas Break*

December 29 No Sunday School – *Christmas Break*

#### **Sunday School Christmas Program Rehearsal for 5th Graders**

Wednesday, December 11, 6:00 – 6:45 p.m. in St. John's Hall

#### **Parents Night Out**

Friday, December 6, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m., ages 3-10

#### **Sunday School Christmas Program**

Sunday, December 15, 11:00 a.m.

Pre-service music starts at 10:45 a.m.

#### **Christmas Break**

No Wednesday programming on December 25 and January 1

No Sunday School on December 22 and December 29

#### **Breakfast, PJs and Movie Morning**

Friday, January 3, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**4th and 5th Grade CA Techism resumes in February**

## **Our next Parent Gathering, "Analyzing the Bully", Sunday, January 12**

Just what is going on inside the brain of a bully? Join us for this interactive presentation that provides attendees the opportunity to hear about the research regarding bullying, as well as practical, strength-based approaches for addressing the problem of bullying. Our presenter, Adam Arnold, MA, LMFT, LADC is a licensed psychotherapist, practicing at Enliven Psychotherapy in St. Paul, MN. Our St. John's youth are also welcome to attend this gathering and learn about this important topic.

## **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.

# YOUTH MINISTRY @ ST. JOHN'S

## Important Confirmation Schedule Announcements

In December, we will have a special session on **Wednesday, December 11th** for all confirmands 7th-9th grades and not on Wednesday, December 18th as previously stated.

On **Wednesday, December 11th**, we will be organizing a trip to see nationally renowned Christian Hip-Hop Artist, AGAPE, with his guest, Rachel Kurtz, at Farmington Lutheran. The concert is from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. So we will meet in the parking lot at 5:45 p.m. and return around 9:00 p.m. As a parent, if you are interested in coming or willing to drive, please contact Mike at 645-4429 or youth@stjohnsnorthfield.org.



## Parents Night Out



**When:** Friday, December 6th, 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**Where:** Fellowship Hall

**What:** In effort to give our young families support during the holiday season, we're looking for High School and Confirmation age-youth to help staff with a night where parents are invited to drop their kids off for a couple hours so they can go holiday shopping, have a date-night, or do whatever else it is they'd like. Youth will help lead games like GaGa and Romans and Christians and assist with a meal of pizza and fruit. Interested youth should either respond to this email, or sign up outside the Sacristy. Children between the ages of 3 and 10 are welcome. Also, if you are a parent with students that are out of elementary school we would love to have your help, too!

## Pay-It-Forward

**When:** Saturday, December 7th, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Where:** Econo Foods

**What:** Come help bag groceries as part of a service and outreach event. Despite many of your experiences with groups bagging groceries for a fundraiser, we're doing something different as an exercise in paying-it-forward. Sign-up for one of the three shifts on the sheet outside the sacristy and find out what it is all about! This also counts as one of our Confirmation Service events.



## Celebrating 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 7, at 10:30 a.m. Please call the Church Office if you plan to attend.

## Children & Communion

Holy Communion is the meal of all the baptized children of God. Communion preparation for children and parents is provided on an individual basis throughout the year at St. John's. A retreat on Holy Communion is held each spring for Third Graders and their parents. If you have questions about communion or if your baptized child has expressed an interest in receiving Holy Communion, please contact a pastor.

# *Serving on Sundays in December*

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## *Acolytes*

- December 1** (8:30) Anna Willkomm, Elsa Hoff; (11:00) Sylvia Koenig, Kuchceang Mangok  
**December 8** (8:30) Madison Ims, Anne France; (11:00) Kai Legvold, Sam Motzko  
**December 15** (8:30) Emily Canedy, Anne France; (11:00) Viveka Hall-Holt, Ariana Beeby  
**December 22** (8:30) Trey Coudret, Grant Huston; (11:00) James Bull, Halvor Bratland  
**December 29** (10:00) TBD

## *Assisting Ministers*

- December 1** TBD  
**December 8** TBD  
**December 15** TBD  
**December 22** TBD  
**December 29** TBD

## *Welcome Desk*

- December 1** TBD  
**December 8** Char Carlson  
**December 15** Eric Lund  
**December 22** Sue Brockman  
**December 29** Elizabeth Wicks

## *Communion Preparers*

- December 1** David and Debbie Nitz  
**December 8** Alan and Lynette Marks  
**December 15** Wes and Rae Pearson  
**December 22** David and Debbie Becker  
**December 29** Carolyn Nitz, Christine Anderson

## *Counters*

- December 1** Sue Brockman, Kasia Gonnerman, Otto and LaVerne Reitz  
**December 8** Patrick Bougie, Brenda Bultman, Dan Franklin, Elden Zempel  
**December 15** Amy Boxrud, Bill and Char Carlson, Mark Ulmer  
**December 22** Jerry and Karen Appeldoorn, Brent Bash, Basil Mroz  
**December 29** Chris and Martha Erickson, Rebecca Judge, Dean Ostlie

## *Ushers*

- December 1** (8:30) Doug Child, Alan Alberg, Duane Benson, Len Hoffmann, Rick Hillard, Doug Johnson, Gordon Mickelsen; (10:00) Wes Pearson, Brian Boyum, John Hanson, Peggy Hanson, Brandon Kimber, Dale Kimber  
**December 8** (8:30) Dan Franklin, Jim Enestvedt, Bob Johnson, Rob McCarthy, Brent Mueller, Ruthie Neuger, Don Sahling, Patrick Bougie, Dick Werdahl; (10:00) Jonathan Norrie, Zachary Bahler, Andrew Dell, Terry Dell, David Halsor, Dick Kleber, Michael Sylvester, Suzanne Sylvester, Steve Williams  
**December 15** (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, Lowell Johnson, Andy Langehough, Basil Mroz, Greg Norman, Doug O'Leary  
**December 22** (8:30) Dallas Berg, Niles Austvold, Myron Dack, Erik Hong, Eric Lund, Rob Nutt, Mark Polzin, Bruce Rickert; (11:00) Corrine Heiberg, Elvin Heiberg, Michael Gasior, David Rudser, Susan Rudser, Andy Westerback, Emily Westerback  
**December 29** (10:00) Corrine Heiberg, Elvin Heiberg, Michael Gasior, David Rudser, Susan Rudser, Andy Westerback, Emily Westerback



# *Learning and Fellowship*

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## **Sunday Learning and Fellowship in December**

*Fellowship Time for children, youth, and adults begins at 9:30 a.m.*

*Coffee served in St. John's Hall (unless otherwise noted)*

*Sunday School (Lower Level) begins at 9:45 a.m.*

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

### **December 1:**

*No Sunday School - Thanksgiving Break*

*Prayers for Healing and Intercession. Chapel (second floor).*

*Forum: "Synod Trip to Tanzania", presented by Olivia Riggins. 9:50 a.m., Theater.*

### **December 8:**

*Prayers for Healing and Intercession. Chapel (second floor).*

*Forum: Report presented by the Properties & Grounds Board. The presentation will include a tour of various building projects. 9:50 a.m., Sanctuary.*

### **December 15:**

*Coffee and Fellowship in the Commons.*

*Prayers for Healing and Intercession. Chapel (second floor).*

*Congregational Meeting: For the purpose of voting on a proposal to refinance our current mortgage and to advance an amount of money to complete essential tuck-pointing on the church exterior. 9:45 a.m., Sanctuary.*

### **December 22:**

*No Sunday School - Christmas Break*

*Farewell Reception for Pastor Mark Johson. 9:35 a.m., St. John's Hall.*

*Prayers for Healing and Intercession. Chapel (second floor).*

*Forum: History of Christmas. Presented by Mark Granquist, Luther Seminary. 9:50 a.m., Theater.*

### **December 29:**

*No Sunday School - Christmas Break*

*Farewell Reception for Pastor Orlin Mandsager. 11:00 a.m., St. John's Hall.*

*Carol Sing with John Ferguson. 11:30 a.m., St. John's Hall*

*(NOTE - Only one worship service this day).*

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## **Poinsettia Orders**

The Chancel Guild will be taking orders for poinsettias between services on Sunday, December 15, and Sunday, December 22. The flowers will be used to decorate the church for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. If you would like to order a poinsettia in honor or memory of someone, stop in the Commons on either of the above referenced Sundays to sign up.



# Notes of Thanks

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**Nursery Thank you** to all the wonderful volunteers who offer 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 St Olaf student, Kari Heistad. It is truly appreciated!

October 2013

Dear St. John's,

We recently celebrated the House Dedication of our 31st home with the Weed Family in Dundas! You can imagine the excitement this family is feeling as they move into a home of their own!

...Contributing to Habitat for Humanity is an investment in the future of families and communities. Habitat empowers adults and kids to reach their full potential. Thank you for helping that effort with your donation of \$1,030. Thanks for support building local, simple, decent and affordable housing.

With joy,

Dayna Norvold, Rice County Habitat for Humanity Executive Director

September 2013

Dear St. John's Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your recent gift of \$1,073 to the ELCA Malaria Campaign. Your faithful generosity makes a life-changing, life-saving difference. Your gift is greatly appreciated... As the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we do more together than we ever could do alone. We are a church that believes God is calling us into the world – together. Thank you for your support.

Jessica Nipp Hacker, Coordinator, ELCA Malaria Campaign

September 26, 2013

Dear Friends at St. John's Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your gift of \$2,000 to support Daniel Rinehart, Alison Hartke, Paul Nichol, and Kristofer Coffman's academic pursuits here at Luther Seminary... Your prayers and ongoing financial support have an impact that will be seen for years to come. Thank you for investing in the next generation of bold and faithful leaders!

Sincerely,

Lisa S. Cohen, CFRE, Director of the Sustaining Fund – Luther Seminary

St. John's Congregation,

Thank you so much for your support with my college education at Luther. Your generous support is helping me be a successful student...

Kelsey Sorensen

# Mission Outreach

## St. John's Extends God's Love to Colombian School

In 2012 St. John's received a financial gift from the estate of Val Hallan. Val was an elementary school teacher in Northfield for thirty-one years and a long-time member of St. John's. Val's gift to St. John's was designated to support global missions. Since Val was a teacher, the Benevolence and Social Concerns Board decided to honor her bequest by supporting education at the schools connected to our partner congregations. In May 2013 St. John's sent almost half of the gift - \$42,000 - to support the Iambi Secondary School in Tanzania. Last month the Board authorized the dispersal of another part of Val's gift - \$42,000 - to the El Cocuy Lutheran Elementary School in Colombia. School leaders sent a plan to St. John's this summer detailing plans to repair bathrooms, renovate the school courtyard, rewire classrooms for increased use of technology, and purchase computers and other needed resources. Most of the students who attend the El Cocuy school are not members of the Lutheran Church. Since the school is in the same building that houses the church, this gift will enhance the work of both the school and church and strengthen a goal that both institutions share - to serve the community in Christ's name. We give thanks for Val Hallan, her love of the church, and her desire to extend God's love to those in need.

## Two Ways To Serve This Month . . .



### "Pay It Forward" Service Project

Saturday, December 7, from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 4-9th graders are invited to join us in bagging groceries for the community. This is not meant to be a fundraiser but to be a witness in paying-it-forward with a *memorable twist*. What's the twist? You'll just have to come and see! We are looking for students to do the bagging and a few parents to supervise and hopefully we will have enough people to keep it to one hour shifts. If you're interested, there is a *sign-up board in the Commons outside St. John's Hall* or talk to Julie or Mike. This is a great opportunity, Confirmands, to do your service projects!

### Community Christmas Dinner

We approach Christmas season at St. John's with many expectations. Our focus on the Savior's birth as a renewal of our faith will involve us in many activities and events. Among these events is our annual gift to the community: Christmas Day Dinner at St. John's.

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 people from all parts of 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 or contact the Joanne Sommer at [sharedministry@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:sharedministry@stjohnsnorthfield.org) or 645-4429.

# News and Events

## Advent Fair ~ Wednesday, December 4

We celebrate the beginning of the Advent Season with our wonderful Advent Fair! Here is the schedule for the evening:

**5:15 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.:** in St. John's Hall serving Lasagna, Salad and Garlic Bread

**5:15 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.:** Fair Trade Fair in the Commons ~ Handcrafts from around the world, provided by Serrv International, will be on display to purchase along with Lutheran World Relief Coffee, Cocoa and Tea

**5:45 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.:** All ages are welcome to come and create Christmas crafts in St. John's Hall, check out the many wonderful children's Christmas books on display from the St. John's Library.

*If you'd like to help with the event, please contact Julie at [children@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:children@stjohnsnorthfield.org). are also looking for people to help set up the Fair on Tuesday, December 3.*

## The St. Johns Exterior – A Detailed Look at Bricks and Mortar

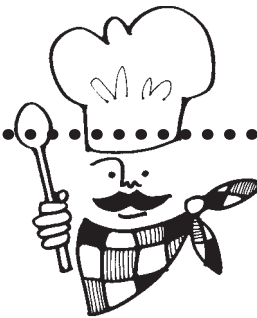
Exterior updates done this year... Windows, Landscaping, Sidewalks, Waterproofing...

More importantly, what do we have left to do? Tuck-pointing and replacing Bricks, Castings, and Louvers.

Attend the Forum on December 8th at 9:45 a.m. – we will share pictures and comments about our accomplishments this year and the challenges facing our aging church.

## From the Stewardship Board

During the weeks leading up to Stewardship Sunday on Nov. 3, the Stewardship Board highlighted many St. John's ministries through speakers and bulletin inserts. The mission and ministry of St. John's need your commitment of financial support as well as your talents and time. We thank all those who have completed and returned their pledge cards. If you have not yet done so, it's not too late! Please prayerfully consider how you will share your financial resources and time to support the work of St. John's. Complete your pledge card, then drop it in the offering plate on Sunday morning or deliver or mail it to the Church Office. If you need a pledge card, contact the Church Office. The offering prayer reminds us why we give: *Merciful Father, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us — ourselves, our time and our possessions — signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



## St. John's Wednesday Night Meals

Let's get together for Dinner -  
Come, share a meal!

All are welcome, it's a fantastic time for  
fellowship for ALL ages!

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

**Wednesday, December 4**  
Lasagna and Garlic Bread

**Wednesday, December 11**  
Taco Boats

**Wednesday, December 18**  
Scalloped Potatoes with Ham

Free will offering appreciated!

**Come, Share a Meal!**

# *From our Congregation President*

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Spend a few hours sitting quietly within our walls.

St. John's teems with life and activity. Nearly every day, a multitude of people enter the doors for a multitude of purposes.

This vibrant community is about to add another layer of activity and transition to our life together. All are welcome and encouraged to take part in these transition times.

## **TRANSITIONS:**

On December 22nd, we will bid "Farewell" to Pastor Mark Johnson at a reception between services. Pastor Mark will be taking some time to discern the next steps in his life journey. St. John's will make that possible by providing transition funds for him. He will continue to receive his salary through March 2014. This is a small token of our gratitude for Mark's service to the church over the last almost 11 years.

On December 29th, we will say good-bye to Pastor Orlin Mandsager at a reception. Details will be announced on the website and in the bulletin. December 29th will be Pastor Orlin's last Sunday at St. John's as our interim pastor.

On January 19, we will welcome Pastor Pam Fickenscher for her first Sunday. We will hold a "getting to know you" reception the first Sunday in February. We will announce details of this, and other opportunities to get to know Pastor Fickenscher, as we finalize them.

The Personnel Committee is in the process of activating the search for the Director of Music, Arts, and Worship. Please contact members of the Executive Committee or Council if you have questions.

We look forward to continuing these conversations, and doing the work of the church with each of you.

Respectfully,

Sandi Gerdes

Congregation President

## *November Actions*

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### **Radio Broadcasts**

**November 3, 2013**, given in memory of Helen and Leon Ingram by their grandchildren, Deborah Dickson, Julie Dickson, Tara Dunn, and Tracee Bosch. Helen's birthday was November 6, 1912.

**November 10, 2013**, given by Steve and Judy Swanson in memory of Jennifer Koenig.

**November 17, 2013**, given by friends of St. John's.

**November 24, 2013**, given by Bev Mahachek in memory of Lee and Roger Mahachek.

### **Deaths**

Karen Hamilton, October 30, 2013

Mark Feroe, November 11, 2013

# 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.

## Connections

Contact: Carol Schoen 645-6840

## Faith Alive

Contact: David & Genevieve Quarberg  
645-0089

## Gathered in the Word

Contact: Pr. Johnson 645-4429

## Grief Support

Contact: Barbara Knaak 664-0444

## Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Contact: Gary Knutson 663-1522

## 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

## Spiritual Practices

Contact: Dick Beckman 664-3882

## Tuesday Noon Bible Study

Contact: Pr. Orlin or Pr. Mark 645-4429

## Women of the ELCA Circles

Contact: Shirley Keltto 785-317-9509  
Jo Franklin 720-281-5107

## Women of the ELCA Knitting

Contact: Kathy Vang 645-4397

## Women of the ELCA Quilting

Contact: Kathy Vang 645-4849

## Women's Breakfast Group

Contact: Kathy Mellstrom 663-1451

## Come Again, Lord Jesus

*By Barbara Eaves*

One year, while growing up, I simply could not wait until Christmas to find out what was under the tree. So a couple of weeks before Christmas when mom and dad were off running errands, I went looking until I found my unwrapped gift under their bed: a brand new pair of figure skates. It was so exciting as I spent almost every day skating at a neighborhood rink. However, while I was anxious to try out those new skates, discovering them early diminished the anticipation of receiving the gift when Christmas arrived—and pretending not to know about them took away the surprise and sheer joy in opening the gift.

It is different with the anticipation of Advent, when we prepare once again to meet and receive the gift of the Christ Child. Yes, we already know what the gift is, but unlike the gift of ice skates, the gift of the Christ Child comes to us anew every year. And because we know the rest of the story, we know as well the gifts that Jesus brought and still brings to the world: a new way of living that is filled with kindness, compassion, care for the world and for one another, and a new picture of God who is merciful and full of grace.

During the next four weeks, we wait with anticipation the birth of the One who comes to us again, and through whose life we are given abundant gifts which we are invited to unwrap and share with all the world.

*Come, Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ;  
our hearts are open wide in trust.  
Oh, show us now your lovely grace,  
upon the sorrows shine your face,  
and let your Holy Spirit guide  
our journey in your grace so wide.  
We praise your holy name,  
from age to age the same.*

**Fling Wide the Door**  
ELW 259 vs. 4

*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,  
[classysandi@yahoo.com](mailto:classysandi@yahoo.com)

Susan Beeby, 650-0998,  
[susan@beeby-us.com](mailto:susan@beeby-us.com)

Barb Eaves, 645-4172,  
[pbeaves@hotmail.com](mailto:pbeaves@hotmail.com)

Mark Johnson, 645-4429,  
[mjohnson@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:mjohnson@stjohnsnorthfield.org)

Richard Nelson, 650-0203,  
[richardnelson\\_03@q.com](mailto:richardnelson_03@q.com)

Richard Beckmen, 664-3882,  
[dickbeck32@q.com](mailto:dickbeck32@q.com)

**\* Small Group Coming in February \***

*Loving God and Neighbor*

The words of the great commandment found in Luke read, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." Using the book, *God's Five Love Languages*, by Gary Chapman, this group will explore the ways we communicate love.

Group will meet for four Sundays in February.  
Facilitator: Susan Beeby



## WOMEN OF THE ELCA

### Mission Statement:

To mobilize women to act boldly  
Women of the ELCA (WELCA) includes ALL women of St. Johns!

The study theme for 2013-2014 is "In Good Company: Stories of Biblical Women" by Kay Ward.

### WOMEN'S ADVENT GATHERING, *Saturday, December 14, 9:30 AM*

All women of the church, including little girls and their big sisters, are invited to a Saturday morning that includes a story and music and food. The story will be narrated from a quilt made by Jean Wakely's mother, Jewell Wolk. Jean will tell the Biblical story of Ruth and Naomi, told from the mother-in-law's point of view. You remember how Ruth became the wife of Boaz and they became ancestors of King David from whose line Jesus was born, a fitting Advent story. JoAnn Polley will play her clarinet. The Women's Breakfast Group will serve a continental breakfast. Free-trade handcrafts will be for sale. There will be **child-care** for infants and toddlers.

**If you wondered** about the Thank Offering from the last WELCA meeting, you should know that \$499.50 was given (in addition to \$266.00 for our local group) and will be sent to the national WELCA office to support publications like GATHER, the web site, free program resources, and cooperative efforts. Thank offerings began in Protestant churches around 1900, using small boxes where women kept their coins to add up and be given to the church.

**Gordon and Betty Olson** amazed us all at the last WELCA meeting with the strength of their program, **Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry**. Their web site is [www.lutheranpartners.org](http://www.lutheranpartners.org) and if you wish, you can follow them on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/lutheranpartners](http://www.facebook.com/lutheranpartners).

**The elected leaders of St. Johns WELCA** are following the long history of being "thinkers and doers." They are planning ahead to the Cannon River Conference Spring Event which St. John's will be hosting on Saturday, April 12 from 9:30 a.m. through lunch. The focus will be on Lutheran Campus Ministry, with campus pastors Tammy Dahlvang from Mankato, Corrine Denis from Winona, and a student from St. Olaf. The offering will go to campus ministry on those three campuses. This is a program that should speak to high-school-age young women as well as their mothers.

### Circle Schedules:

Monday, 12/9: 12:00 noon Bible Study leaders;

Wednesday, 12/11: **Lydia**, 9:30 a.m. (Jo Dahlin, Anita Hellie); **Sarah** 9:30 a.m. (Char Nelson, Carol Nesheim)

Thursday 12/12: **Martha/Claudia**, 9:30 a.m. (Marilyn Jacobson), **Abigail Rebecca** 2:00 p.m. (Gert Brosz),  
**Elizabeth** 1:30 p.m. (Marie Benson, Gretchen Hargrove)

Friday 12/13: **Mary** 1:00 p.m. (Rachel Stark)

**Quilting Schedule:** Monday, 12/16 and Thursday 12/19 from 9:00-11:00 a.m., Fellowship Hall

**Coffee Sales:** Sunday, 12/15

Please submit items for this WELCA information page to: Jo Franklin, [jo\\_franklin50@yahoo.com](mailto:jo_franklin50@yahoo.com) or 720-281-5107  
Please submit items for the Sunday bulletin to: Shirley Keltto, [kelttos@msn.com](mailto:kelttos@msn.com) or 785-317-9509.

**Pastors**

*Orlin Mandsager  
Mark Johnson  
John Quam*

**Children's Ministry**

*Julie Brehmer*

**Facility Manager/  
Custodian**

*Don Thompson*

**Financial Manager**

*Bernie Renander*

**Music Ministry**

*John Ferguson*

**Music Staff**

*Carol Benson - Alleluia  
Cathy Rodland - Jubilate  
& Hosanna, Organist  
Ruth Legvold - Laudate  
Zack Pelletier - Rejoice  
Ringers*

**Office Manager**

*Leah Garlie*

**Shared Ministry**

*Joanne Sommers*

**Youth Ministry**

*Mike Skunes*

**Security and  
Custodial Assistants**

*Marvin and Irene Perez*

**Parish Nurse**

*Lynette Marks*

**Congregation  
President**

*Sandi Gerdes*



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**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  
Monday, December 10.***

Please get submissions in by the deadline. If articles are not in, they will not appear in the January edition of the Voice. Thanks for your help and cooperation.



**Annual Meeting Reports!**

For all those who are submitting information for the Annual Report - the due date for reports is

***Thursday, December 27***

Please get the reports in on time!