

THE VOICE

OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Extending God's Love

April 2014

Volume 54, Number 4

*on the
inside...*

Board Game Night

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Exterior Restoration
Project Set to Begin

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Easter Flowers

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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 to:

office@stjohnsnorthfield.org

For information, contact the Church Office:

phone: 507-645-4429

fax: 507-645-9633

e-mail:

office@stjohnsnorthfield.org

website:

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.

Worship for Wednesday Nights

April 2

Haugen Vespers

6:30 p.m.

(Homily - Ruth Hansen)

April 9

Haugen Vespers

6:30 p.m.

(Homily - Kaethe Schwehn)

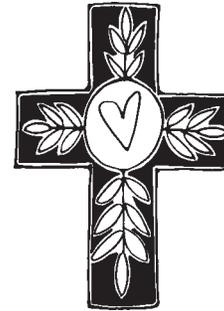
Thank You to Don Thompson!

Don Thompson will be stepping down from the facilities manager position at St. John's this month. Don has decided to branch out on his own, but will continue on a part time basis starting the week of March 17 in order to complete the projects

currently in progress. You will also continue to see Don during the upcoming exterior brick tuck pointing as he has agreed to oversee the project for St. John's.

Don began serving at St. John's in July 2013 and has helped us make significant progress on long overdue repair and maintenance projects here. Many thanks to Don for leading these efforts and our prayers and blessings go with him in his new endeavor!

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Worship for Holy Week and Easter

Sunday of the Passion, April 13

Procession with Palms and

Holy Communion

8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday, April 17

Holy Communion

12 noon and 6:30 p.m.

Good Friday, April 18

Liturgy of Good Friday

12 noon and 6:30 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 19

The Great Vigil of Easter 7:30 p.m.

at Boe Chapel, St. Olaf College

Celebration of the Resurrection

Sunday, April 20

8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:00 a.m.

Holy Communion at all services

Easter Breakfast from

8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

9:30 service broadcast

on KYMN 1080 AM

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

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*

Stephen Ministry caregivers and care receivers try to meet regularly, face-to-face, but sometimes that isn't comfortable or even possible. Phone calls and e-mail messages allow quick communication. However, a handwritten note is often the best way to express ongoing concern and support. Seven years ago St. John's Stephen Ministers decided to have cards created to use specifically for that purpose. We invited Judy Swanson to design cards for us and she graciously agreed.

Our congregation enjoys the gift of Judy and her art all around us. Her illustrations have graced many of our bulletin covers and her angels welcome us to worship every Christmas. The long blue Advent banners with pomegranates are Judy's, and it is her water lily cross logo that identifies the Women of the ELCA. Of course, the Swanson family is responsible for both the inspiration and the execution of the decorations for St. Olaf's Christmas Festival every year.

Judy met with us, talked through the messages and tone we hoped the cards would express, and helped us choose appropriate Bible texts such as, "Remember, I am with you always." and "I came that you might have life and have it abundantly." Her artist's eye and believer's soul transformed that conversation into the four beautiful cards on the Stephen Ministry bulletin board. Receive the peace, comfort, and joy they offer all as you walk by them and watch for an opportunity to purchase some, at cost, to extend that peace, comfort, and joy to others.

If you or someone you know would benefit from a Stephen Minister, please contact Joan Halvorson at 645-8445 or the Church Office.

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

Matthew 5:4

Grief Support Ministry

Northfield Grief Support Coalition:

A grief support group will continue to meet on Monday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m. until April 28th, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 418 E. Sumner St., Northfield. The groups are open to anyone who has lost a loved one. Further information is available by contacting Barb Knaak at 664-0444 or bknaak4@charter.net

Grief Care Resource: Care Notes are one of the grief support resources at St. John's. Stop by the Commons to pick one up for yourself or for a loved one.



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."

April 19, 2013
Jean Perman

April 23, 2013
Rebecca Kasper

April 28, 2013
Ted Rudser

Pastors' Page

Dear Friends of St. John's

In the grave they laid him, love by hatred slain

Thinking that he would never wake again,

Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen

Love is come again, like wheat arising green.

The signs of new life are all around us, even though it looks like it may be awhile before we see much green around our yards this spring:

- Our first inquirer's group met this past Sunday, with nearly twenty people, newcomers and "oldtimers," sharing how God is moving in their lives and speaking to them through the worship of St. John's. The risen life of Christ keeps breathing anew into our community.
- New babies are being born and families are preparing their children for baptism. The risen life of Christ envelops the new lives among us.
- Every week an astonishing number of you reach out to others through Stephen Ministry, visiting, offering a meal or sending a card. You offer the risen life of Christ through your caring hands.
- Two search committees are working hard to find our next Organist/Director of Music and our next Associate Pastor. We are eager to share the risen life of Christ in this place alongside these new leaders when God brings them our way.
- All this month dozens of you will be faithfully preparing songs of meditation and celebration for our observance of Holy Week April 13-20. Don't forget to thank all of our amazing musicians who help us sing the life of Christ into our worship.

Every year at this time, we keep the three day feast of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. If it has not been your pattern to experience all that Holy Week has to offer, I invite you to do so this year. On Thursday we will receive Christ's words of forgiveness spoken over each of us. On Friday we will gather to meditate on the wondrous love that Christ showed in giving up his life. And on Easter we will again sing and shout "Alleluia!" giving thanks that the resurrection of Christ is still happening among us as Christ's body.

Raised from the dead, my living Lord is seen

Love is come again like wheat arising green. (ELW 379)

Shoulder Season

As I've been packing our house for our pending move, I've noted that it's often difficult to tell when it's truly "safe" to put away winter clothes in Minnesota. Knowing what to leave out and what can be packed away can be a challenge. So it is with this shoulder season of pastoral interim at St. John's. There is much that might be needed, but little predictability about how or when such needs will arise.

Though I might wish I could do the work of two full-time pastors, I obviously cannot. At the same time, it's become clear that adding a new full-time person to the staff is neither simple nor, in the short run, necessarily time-saving. After some conversation, the Council of Ministers and staff determined that since the SE MN synod has few interim people available now, we will instead make use of St. John's treasure trove of talent – people who can assist with worship leadership, pastoral care, volunteer coordination and many other tasks that will arise in the months ahead. When summer arrives and we have a better sense of the Call Committee's timeline, the Council will reassess whether additional paid pastoral staff are needed for the remainder of the interim.

...continued on page 8

YOUTH MINISTRY @ ST. JOHN'S

Romans and Christians

When: 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Friday, April 11th

Where: St. John's!

Who: 6th-12th Grades
(Friends welcome)

What: A few of our 9th graders will be hosting a game of Romans and Christians. Come enjoy hanging with friends, snacks, and playing games in the dark!



Board Game Night

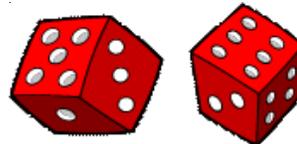
When: 6:00 p.m., Saturday, April 26th

Where: St. John's Hall

Who: All ages welcome

What: Get to know some new people at St. John's through "Game Night"! Bring your favorite board game or card game to teach some new friends at St.

John's. Join us for as little or as long as you would like. Snacks and treats will be provided.



Easter Breakfast

The Easter Breakfast is one way we celebrate together as a congregation and with those who visit St. John's. Your participation makes this time of fellowship possible and is a way of serving both the congregation and the community. The money raised from the Easter Breakfast goes towards summer youth activities including, middle school mystery tours, bible camp, and missions trips.

We ask parents of youth to supply the following:

6th/7th Grade: Two Containers of Strawberries

8th/9th Grade - Two Dozen Muffins

10th/11th Grade - One gallon of Orange Juice and a Dozen Muffins

12th Grade - One gallon of Skim Milk and a Melon



Important Dates to Remember!

Sunday School Schedule

April 6	Sunday School
April 13	Sunday School
April 20	No Sunday School - Easter Sunday
April 27	Sunday School

"ROCK" - Wednesday Afterschool Programming

April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Catechism for Grades 4 and 5

April 2, 9, 16

Third Grade CAT Retreat

Wednesday, April 23, 5:30-7:15 p.m., Fellowship Hall

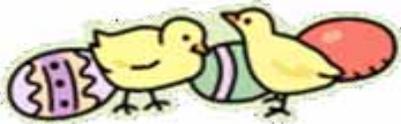
4th and 5th Grade CAT, April, 2, 9, and 16!

4th and 5th graders resume Catechism classes starting on Wednesday, April 2. CAT classes meet in the lower level of St. John's from 4:00-4:45 p.m.; 5th grade in their Sunday School Room studying the Apostles' Creed and 4th grade in Room 9, studying the Ten Commandments. Don't forget your CAT books!

3rd Grade CAT Retreat

Parents, along with their 3rd graders, are invited to attend the last of our 3rd Grade Catechism retreat on Wednesday, April 23 from 5:30-7:15 p.m. The topic is The Sacrament of Communion. We will gather in the Sanctuary before attending dinner in St. John's Hall.

Please RSVP to Julie Brehmer if you are unable to attend.



Annual Easter Egg Hunt, Saturday, April 19!

The Annual St. John's Easter Egg Hunt is on Saturday, April 19! This event invites children up to 5th grade, along with parents, to meet in the Commons at 9:30 a.m. for the egg hunt. Make sure to bring a basket or bag for collecting eggs and feel free to bring a friend!

Everyone: We need individually wrapped candy and small items to fill the eggs. Donations can be dropped off in the Church Office or put in the basket in the Commons. Thanks so much!

Our Next Parent Gathering is Sunday, April 6

"It's a Scary World Out There: Talking with your Children about Difficult Things"

Children ask a lot of tough questions. Mary Loven, Parent Educator and Member of the Rice County Mental Health Collective, will be here to talk about typical fears our children have at different ages, guidelines to help you decide how much to expose your child to tragic events and strategies to help your child feel safe in an often unpredictable world. The Gathering will meet in the Fireside Room from 9:50-10:40 a.m. Everyone is invited!

Children, Come to the Table!

When is my child ready to take Holy Communion? When is anyone really *ready*? As Lutherans we believe that the sacraments are gifts of God not dependent on our understanding or preparation to be effective as gifts of grace. At St. John's we urge parents to bring their children to the table every week, whether they receive a blessing or the bread and wine. Parents may use discretion based on their own piety and family situation as to when a child receives the bread and wine, but *there is no minimum age*.

Age appropriate materials are available for discussing communion with your child from age 4 and up. Contact Pastor Fickenscher if you are interested in having your child commune for the first time. Grade school children of any age may ask to join the 3rd grade CAT retreat on April 23 (see above).

Join us this summer!
Sign up for summer camp! It's a BLAST!



Settlers' Camp at Good Earth Village, Spring Valley, MN (grades 2-3) June 8-10

This three day, two night camp takes place in the Log Lodge retreat center at GEV. Activities include worship, Bible studies, hiking, campfires, games, creek splashing and more! This is a great first time camp experience!

Shores of St. Andrews, New London, MN (grades 3-5) June 15-20

At this week long Bible camp, kids have lots of fun with friends laughing, learning and growing in their faith. Enjoy swimming, kayaking, games, campfires, fellowship, singing and more! This camp is offered through Green Lake Lutheran Ministries.

"On the Road" Summer Camp (K-5), comes to Northfield, August 11-14 *AT ST. JOHN'S THIS YEAR!*****

Good Earth Village, "On the Road!" will bring the fun of summer camp to Northfield. This 5-day program is filled with games, worship, crafts, Bible study and singing. Registration is through Good Earth Village. Campers can register on-line at www.goodearthvillage.org. **It's very popular so register early!** GEV takes approximately 125 campers.

Vacation Bible School, (Pre 1 – K), August 11-14

VBS is sponsored by St. John's, Bethel, Rejoice! and Emmaus Churches of Northfield. Volunteers come together to provide this fun-filled week where children enjoy music, crafts, games, Bible stories and make new friends!

Kindergarteners have the option of going to either VBS or "On the Road". The VBS program will be half days whereas "On the Road" is a full day experience. You decide which program works best for your child! Registration forms available in late April/May.

No one will be turned away from attending summer programs because of financial reasons. Please contact Pastor Pam, Julie Brehmer or Mike Skunes if you need financial assistance.

From the Desk of the Facilities Manager...

On July 15th, 2013, I started my new 'job' as Facility Manager at St. John's. I recall thinking that this was a good move for me and I was pretty excited about this new venture. I had no idea how life changing this would turn out to be for me. Of course there was a warm welcome from everyone. That was sort of expected; it is, after all, a church. However, I quickly came to see that St. John's is much more than a church. It is a family; a spirit-filled home, a community in the truest sense of the word. St. John's is a thriving, vibrant community of the warmest, most dedicated and most sincere people I have ever met. The staff is outstanding professionally and personally. The example they have set, working individually and as a team, is nothing short of amazing. Everyone I have had the honor of meeting at St. John's, not just the staff, but everyone, has touched my heart and each of you have had a significant role in teaching me, through the examples you have set, the true meaning of community and of service. You have shown me what the Christian heart looks like, and it is beautiful.

Many people have thanked me for what I do, or have done while at St. John's. The truth is that I need to thank you, each and every one of you. You have given me something that has moved me deeply and that will stay with me all my days. The only way I can describe this is to say that you have renewed and revived me, my heart and my spirit, and even these words do not come close to describing the miraculous gift all of you have given me. So, I say to you now, thank you, from the very center of my heart, thank you.

In Christ,
Don Thompson

Music and Worship Life at St. John's

As I write this it is snowing again! Are you ready for April and spring? Are you ready for the other spring we celebrate this April – the “spring of souls...the queen of seasons” as John of Damascus writes in his hymn, “Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain” (ELW 363)?

Yes, soon we celebrate the culmination of the Incarnation story, the miracle of Easter. If the weather cooperates, we will be enjoying early spring at Easter but spring is not a miracle even though we often refer to it that way.

In his book, *Peace Like a River*; author Leif Enger has his main character, a young boy, muse about miracles. He writes:

Let me say something about that word: miracle. For too long it's been used to characterize things or events that, though pleasant, are entirely normal...a clear sunrise after an overcast week – a *miracle*, people say, as if they've been educated from greeting cards. I'm sorry, but nope. Such things are worth our notice every day of the week, but to call them miracles evaporates the strength of the word.

Real miracles bother people....They rebut every rule all we good citizens take comfort in. Lazarus obeying orders and climbing up out of the grave – now there's a miracle, and you can bet it upset a lot of folks who were standing around at the time. When a person dies, the earth is generally unwilling to cough him back up. A miracle contradicts the will of earth...

Yes, Easter is a miracle and we bring in the brass, pull out all the stops and whoop it up. Perhaps we like all the fuss and noise because it helps us to cope with our doubts. Christ is alive and in him all are made alive. This **is** miraculous news. The only way we can deal with this Easter message is to believe.

Lord, I believe – Help my unbelief.

A blessed spring and Easter to you all.

John Ferguson
Interim Director of Music

News and Events

Exterior Restoration Project Set To Begin

Made possible by a gift from the Alice Hanson estate, Building Restoration Corporation will begin exterior restoration of the original sanctuary portion of St. John's on Wednesday, April 2. The project will include much needed tuck pointing, damaged brick replacement, precast concrete repairs, and bell tower louver installation.

Be aware that during this time, scaffolding will be set up around the exterior of the building and certain entrances to the building may be closed. In addition, a construction trailer and mortar mixer will be located in the parking lot reducing the number of parking spots available during the course of the roughly two to three month project. For everyone's safety, please do not approach the trailer area or the scaffolding. Look for further updates throughout the course of the project.

News and Events

Call Committee Elected

Members of the Call Committee for Associate Pastor were elected at a special congregational meeting on Sunday, March 9. Members are: Mary Cisar, David Gonnerman, Christy Hall-Holt, Andrea Hoff, Barb Knaak, Amy McBroom, Betsy McLaughlin, Scott Swanson, and Gary Wicks.

Update from Search Committee

Jo Ann Polley, Chair

The Organist/Director of Music, Worship, and Arts search is proceeding on schedule. The committee members are working diligently on your behalf. Applications are arriving regularly, and we are thankful to have a number of good candidates at this point in the search process.

An Untold Story

The parents of Rachel Corrie, the young American girl who was killed in Gaza by an Israeli bulldozer as she tried to prevent the demolition of a Palestinian doctor's home, will be speaking at St. Olaf on Tuesday night, April 8, at 7:00 p.m. This will be in the Viking Theater and is free and open to the public. Following the talk there will be time for discussion and also a showing of the film "The Rachel Corrie Story" that was acted in and produced by Kirstin Franklin Hammergren, the granddaughter of Ruth Hansen and the daughter of Jo & Dan Franklin. Kirstin plans to be there to answer questions also.

The Corries have a fascinating story to tell as they have traveled to Israel several times involving a court case against the Israeli soldier who drove the bulldozer to try to bring justice and stop the practice of destroying the homes of non-violent innocent people.

Shoulder Season *...continued from page 3*

One piece of this interim coverage is a Coordinator position, which will be filled by Melissa Berthelsen as long as it is needed. Melissa will be the scheduler for pastoral coverage when needed during my move and vacation, and will also coordinate volunteers for such efforts as our new inquirer's class. If you are ever in doubt about who to contact first for a pastoral need, please call the Church Office first and our Office Manager (or my voice mail) will direct you to the appropriate person.

Will and I look forward to moving to Northfield and our new home in June. In the mean time, we ask your patience and prayers in this "shoulder season" of our lives.



St. John's Wednesday Night Lenten Soup Suppers

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

Wednesday, April 2

Wild Rice Soup
Lentil with Vegetables
w/Bread

Wednesday, April 9

Split Pea with Ham
Split Ham
w/Bread

Wednesday, April 16

Northern Bean Soup
Broccoli Cheese
w/Bread

Free will offering appreciated!

Come, Share a Meal!

News and Events

St. John's Offers ELCA College Scholarships

High school seniors who are going to attend an ELCA College, or those that are currently enrolled in an ELCA College, are eligible for a scholarship from St. John's Lutheran Church Foundation. Your college most likely matches this. This is a non-competitive scholarship. Any college student can request this scholarship each year up to four years for each year she/he is a full time student. The amount of the individual scholarship will be determined by the number of scholarship applicants. You must submit an application form each year you attend an ELCA college. If you do not receive a letter with an application by April 9th, feel free to request one from Mike Skunes, Director of Youth and Family, at youth@stjohnsnorthfield.org.

Application forms are due Sunday, April 27, 2014.

February and March Actions

Deaths

Marilyn Haugen, February 23, 2014

Bryce Korba, March 8, 2014

Annette Peterson, March 14, 2014

Rev. Leo Bjorlie, March 17, 2014

Ruth Ferguson, March 23, 2014

Radio Broadcasts

March 2, 2014, given in honor of Eugene and Joyce Schrader's 70th wedding anniversary. They were married at St. John's on March 2, 1944.

March 9, 2014, given in loving memory of Ken Struss, Cora and Elmer Schultz from their families.

March 16, 2014, given by friends and family of Kevin Heiberg who died on January 21. Kevin was the son of Elvin and Corrine Heiberg.

March 23, 2014, given in memory of Arlene Rudser from her family and friends.

March 30, 2014, given by Mary and Jim Bierman in memory of Marion Boyd.

Memorials and Gifts

In memory of **Ruth Helgen**: by David Helgen, Brynhild Rowberg, Judy Swanson, Ann Helgen, Chris Weber.

In memory of **June Swanson**: by Charlotte Althoff.

In memory of **Myrtle Nord**: by Shirley Falck, Edward & Barbara Babel, Elaine Zimmerman, Beverly Adelman, Eulalie Smestad, Ruth Anglin, David & Pat Halson, M.D. Neitzel, Mary Nystuen, Lester & Nancy Hoffman, Jean & Dale Searles

In memory of **Kevin Heiberg**: by Donna Werdahl, Rachel Peterson, Shirley Falck.

Learning and Fellowship

Sunday Learning and Fellowship in April

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)

April 6:

Small Group: "The Active Live" by Parker Palmer. **9:45 a.m., Room 203.**

Inquirer's Gathering: Baptism or Reaffirmation of Baptism. **9:45 a.m., TBD.**

New Member Session: "New Member Connections". **9:45 a.m., TBD.**

Forum: "National Poetry Month" will feature "The Witness of William Stafford" to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of his birth. The poetry of this productive writer bears witness to his commitment to nonviolence, resolution and reconciliation of conflict, the beauty of the natural world and the value of family. **9:50 a.m., Sanctuary.**

Parent Gathering: "It's a Scary World Out There - Talking with you Children about Difficult Things", presented by Mary Loven. **9:50 a.m., Fireside Room.**

April 13:

Inquirer's Gathering: Baptism or Reaffirmation of Baptism. **9:45 a.m., Fireside Room.**

Forum: "Existing Visual Art in Church, Needed or Nice?" **9:50 a.m., Sanctuary.**

April 20 - Easter Sunday:

Easter Breakfast. **8:30 - 11:00 a.m., St. John's Hall.**

No Forum

April 27:

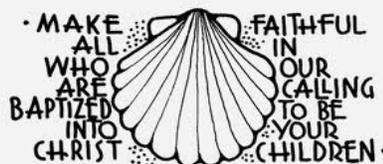
Forum: TBD. **9:50 a.m., St. John's Theater.**

TRANSFERRING TO ST JOHN'S?

Those who wish to formally join St. John's are invited to orientation sessions this spring:

New Member Connections: Sunday, April 6, 9:45 a.m. Fellowship time with new member hosts and a tour of the building— St. John's members who help to welcome and connect new members will be present to answer questions and get acquainted.

New Member Reception and Litany: Sunday, May 4: New members will be formally welcomed during either of the two morning worship services. A reception will be held at 9:45 a.m. in St. John's Hall.



Celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Baptism

Parents who wish to have their baby or child baptized at St. John's are asked to speak with Pastor Pam Fickenscher to discuss the meaning of baptism and to talk about the details of the day. Please contact Pastor Pam by phone at 645-4429 or by email at pfickenscher@stjohnsnorthfield.org

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: The Leadership Team 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: The Leadership Team 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

The Coming of Spring ...

The Promise of Easter

By Barbara Eaves

It is March 13 as I write and it has been a long dreary winter. But today it is 47 degrees, the sun is shining, the ice is melting, the buds on trees are swelling, and you can even see the bare ground in a few places. Driving down St. Olaf Avenue this morning, I saw the surest sign that Spring is on its way: a dozen or more students jogging down the street—in their shorts, of course, and light t-shirts. It also seemed as though there were more smiles on the faces I encountered and if I were younger I might even jump in the air and kick my heels together a few times.

As we are ushered into the freshness of Spring, we also await the Festival of Easter, once again claiming as our own the promise of new life in Christ. Living on the Easter side of the cross, we are already witnesses to, and participants in, the wonders of life anew. At the same time, reality is that our lives are likely to be visited with sorrow and sadness, pain and heartache. It is in just such times and passages that “we need a little Easter...right this very minute” (to adapt a phrase from a popular Christmas song). In celebrating Easter this year, we sing our thanks and praise for the marvels of new life...precious gifts of grace given to us each and every day. Hallelujah!

*Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
love lives again, that with the dead has been;
love is come again like wheat arising green.*

ELW 379

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

Susan Beeby, 650-0998,
susan@beeby-us.com

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

Richard Beckmen, 664-3882
dickbeck32@q.com

Thank you

... to all who have been participating in the Lenten Book Read conversations and to the facilitators, Karl Hella and Deb Seitz.

If you didn't get a chance to read *The Active Life* by Parker Palmer, you can check out a copy in our church library.



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 from churches in the Cannon River Conference will join women from St. John's on **Saturday, April 12, 2014** in a *Spring Gathering* which will feature campus pastors and students from several colleges in Minnesota. Pastor Corrine from Winona, Pastor Tammy from Mankato, Chaplain Brian from Gustavus Adolphus at St. Peter, and St. Olaf students Rebekah Engstrand, Stacey Rudolph, and Johnna Purchase will speak about their experiences as Christian pastors and students who are in deliberative Christian ministry on college campuses. Lutheran Campus Ministry nationwide has pastors on 180 state and private colleges and connects with over 400 campuses through contact pastors.

The morning will also include special music from the Northfield Youth Choir and a quintet of women from St. John's - - - Kristen Partlo, Elizabeth Bade, Ruth Smestad Anglin, Ruth Legvold and Nancy Ordahl Knoch accompanied by Donna Paulsen.

In addition, coffee and rolls will be served during registration, 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. and a lunch will be served at 11:30. People can register using forms found in a packet on the WELCA board in the Commons or on the day, April 12. Adults are \$12 and students \$5 for lunch and program. An offering will be taken and given to the following: Crossroads Campus, Mankato State University; Gustavus Adolphus Campus, St. Peter; Lutheran Campus Ministry, Winona State University and Campus Ministry, St. Olaf.

This gathering is an ideal time for parents and students planning on college in the near future to find out more about how our church continues to minister among young people when they leave home and go on to school.

Many messages come via texting, email, voice mail, and snail mail, but the women of St. John's at our monthly programs have been getting messages from *messengers*, people who have in some mysterious way heard God speaking to them urging them into action. We have heard from people like the Olsons who responded to the murder of their son in Africa by going to Africa, then India, to build schools. We have seen the visual creations of Paul Krause and Fred Somers. We have heard from Tammy Filzen who has worked to make a farm a home for troubled, oppressed young girls and women. In May we will hear from Sister Judy on the task of countering human trafficking. In **May** WELCA will elect some new officers to join in presenting programs that make us all aware of God's working among us and through us.

Circle Bible Studies

Saturday, 4/5: 8:30 a.m. - Women's Breakfast Group (Fireside Room)

Monday, 4/7: noon - Bible Study Leaders

Wednesday, 4/9: 9:30 a.m. - Sarah (Gloria Knutson, 601 Gill Ln.)

9:30 a.m. - Lydia (Judy Smith, 12366 Ibson Ave.)

Thursday, 4/10: 9:30 a.m. - Martha/Claudia (Parkview West)

1:30 p.m. - Elizabeth (Rachel Peterson, 14 Fairway Dr.)

2:00 pm - Abigail/Rebecca (Parkview East)

Friday, 4/11: 1:00 p.m. - Mary (Susan Rudser, 5787 Erwin Way)

Saturday, 4/12 9:00 a.m. - Spring Gathering

Coffee Sales

Sunday, 4/20 - Fair trade coffee, tea, baking chocolate, eating chocolate

Submit items for **Voice** to Genevieve Quarberg (davidquarberg@hotmail.com)

Submit information for **Sunday bulletin** to Jane Gelle (bandjgelle@yahoo.com)

From the Faith and Health Board:

Grief and the Grieved: Lost and Found in Translation?

“Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.” (Isaiah 53:4)

A beautiful sentiment, and yet, what does this mean? How can we find meaning here, let alone hope or beauty, when loss devastates us in sudden tragedy or breaks our hearts through a long, expected, and feared ending? As grief is unique to each person it is common to feel separated from others, unable to communicate our experience, and unable to imagine adequate understanding from others in our personal sorrow.

We each have the need for communion and the need for agency. When we lose our connection with someone we love, are separated from family or community, and/or we lose an ability or position that enabled us to be generative, these needs are threatened. With such loss we can be further haunted by the experiences of isolation and helplessness.

And, often with tragic loss, the bereaved does not recognize the world anymore. There is a shock to the psyche as their known world is shattered, resulting in extreme anxiety, bewilderment, and despair. The griever may feel demoralized, isolated, confused, lost, angry, guilty, ashamed, mistrusting; and may withdraw, shut down, or act out. These reactions are logical but may also prove to be harmful to oneself and to one's relationships.

It is important to translate our grief experience so that we stay connected with ourselves and each other. To do so means to recognize, identify, communicate, and act on behalf of the individual grief experience by asking, sitting with, and living the questions:

1.) What is this grief and what does it mean to enter the tomb? 2.) Who am I, who are we, and how do we keep vigil in the darkness without answers? 3.) How do we find hope and make new meaning from unbidden loss? How can we possibly translate human experience to divine and divine experience to human? To finally arrive at, who I am now? How do we find creative meaning, transformation, beauty, hope, and new life?

As we respond to grief's questions, it can be helpful to remember the value of living the questions without answers and listening to each other and ourselves deeply. When we do this we can learn to tolerate sorrow, helplessness, and vulnerability without trying to control or prevent necessary pain and sadness. Witnessing, holding sacred space, and staying present, respecting the needs of other, knowing our limits, nurturing community are all things we can do. We can hold faith that love has the power to redeem the suffering that comes with loss. And, we can choose to be vulnerable to one another with compassion, trusting we will be held well, without judgement, in confidence, and love. Sometimes this means being held by a friend, family member, community leader, and sometimes it means being cared for by a trained professional. The intentional presence of vulnerability and strength is essential for a sense of security and trust in our supportive relationships, whether we are the bereaved or the witness to the bereaved.

So then perhaps we come to understand what is meant in Isaiah 53:4; that grief, our personal grief, is a relational experience whereby in the body of Christ we might all feel the wound, know the helplessness and confusion. And that, when we live in faith we can tolerate not knowing, not fixing, not controlling. We can wait in darkness together, having faith for each other even when we may have very different experiences.

In his meditation, “Remembering Beauty,” theologian Walter Brueggemann reminds us, “The bread will hold; the wine will last.” That is, we have the resiliency and capacity to survive. That we can hope for healing, transformation, and beauty. It is God's promise to us. And, that we are not alone. We have the love of Christ.

According to Father Thomas Keating, in Alan Jones' *Exploring Spiritual Direction*, “The love of Christ manifested itself in his sheer vulnerability...Divine love is sheer vulnerability...Being vulnerable means loving one another as Christ loved us.”

And what, if not hopeful and beautiful, is the love of Christ?

Naomi Mandsager Bartley

From the Stewardship Board

Stewardship of Time - Spring 2014 Appeal

Don Sahling

We define stewardship as the giving of one's time, talents, and financial resources in the work of the Lord. Taking time from one's busy schedule to use our talents to serve others through singing in one of the choirs, teaching Sunday School, ushering at a church service, serving in the nursery, serving and/or cleaning up at the Wednesday suppers, or helping with the arrangements to serve at a funeral service are just a few of the many ways we serve within our church. But we also serve in ways outside the church and that is equally important: Examples might include but are not limited to serving meals at Thursday's Table, a program that provides one free, hot meal each week for families in need or transition; delivering Meals on Wheels to those in need; helping at the local Food Shelf; or visiting the sick and elderly; just to name a few.

We are also called to share our financial resources in the work of the church both locally and abroad. Locally, funds are needed to provide salaries, heating and lighting the building, snow removal (particularly this year!), Sunday School materials, building insurance, etc. Funds are also used to assist missionaries that St. John's supports in Colombia and Tanzania, starting mission churches throughout the United States, providing clean drinking water in many parts of the world, etc. We will share more information about giving financial support to assist all of these efforts and more later this fall when we have our stewardship drive.

God calls us to serve the church by serving others. A few of these examples have been listed above. These and many other opportunities to serve God by serving others are available to all of us. We hope that you will be open to give of your time, talents, and financial resources to the work of the church in the year ahead. Please feel free to contact Joanne Sommers (645-4429) if you have any questions about how and where you may serve.

From the Peace and Justice group . . .

From Bread for the World *Development Works* Series

The United States has been placing increasing emphasis on country-led development plans and long-term solutions. The Bush administration established the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which makes multi-year grants to poor countries committed to reducing hunger carrying out projects they develop through consultations with their citizens. A key Obama administration effort is Feed the Future, which seeks to improve agriculture by considering a range of solutions from better soil quality to accessible markets for crops.

Development Works from Bread for the World Institute is a series of essays and reports supplying information about global hunger and poverty issues. The intent is to equip us with knowledge and understanding, separating myth from reality, as we advocate with elected representatives as individuals, congregations and synods for policies that will reduce hunger and poverty.

Myth: It's a waste of time and money to give development assistance because it never gets to the people who need it.

Reality: In recent years there has been much more emphasis on transparency and adherence to strict accounting standards. It has become increasingly difficult for anyone to make aid money "disappear," lost to corruption. There are many examples of children, families, and communities who have benefitted from development programs. And there are longer-term results: the rate of global hunger has been cut in half.

Learn much more at www.bread.org.

From the Peace and Justice group (cont.). . .

Responding to Needs in the Criminal Justice System

During the past 2 years the Peace and Justice Group has had many meetings, discussions, and studies about the needs of the current criminal justice system. Thanks to the experience, passion, and expertise of Greg Colby, we have learned of specific needs here in Rice County and way that we might assist.

We are now very close to determining ways we can be of use in helping to meet some of the needs. On April 7 we will review our material consider our options, and hope to choose what we can do.

We hope to have strong representation from our group and from the congregation as a whole at the meeting. Please join us!

Joint Religious Legislative Coalition - Day on the Hill March 13, 2014

“Healing the World” was the theme of Day on the Hill on March 13. Keynote speaker Rabbi David Saperstein laid out the shared spiritual basis for people of faith to be aware of the needs of all persons in our civic society and to respond with compassion and action to meet basic needs.

The individual passion for justice gains strength as coalitions such as JRLC work together on common goals. The presence of participants from all parts of Minnesota seated according to election districts enhanced the sense of possibility for achieving the goals set. Each group was assigned a topic to present to their elected representatives during the afternoon session at the State Capitol. Issues include payday lending reform (which can currently result in absorbent interest and near-permanent debt), support of impartial judiciary (no voting for judges; MN currently has a system in place that evaluates the candidate appointed with opportunity to monitor effectiveness as a judge), Child Care Assistance Program (affordable child care), funding for school lunches, Affordable Housing (bonding issues now before the Legislature—as of March 13) especially for the rising numbers of homeless individuals and families (Affordable Housing Infrastructure Bonds), increasing the minimum wage.

Paul Peterson, Dawn Tommerdahl, and Judith Stoutland, members of the Peace and Justice Group attended Day on the Hill this year. They and three other Northfielders were able to have meetings with Representative David Bly and — along with the delegation of 11 from New Prague — with Senator Kevin Dahle.

The Minnesota Council of Churches, of which the Lutheran Church is a member, is a founding and supporting member of JRLC. St. John’s has contributed to the group for many years and representatives from JRLC have presented Forums and discussions here.

JUSTICE CALENDAR

Monday, April 7, 2014

Peace & Justice Group Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Fireside Room

Topic: Responding to Needs in the Criminal Justice System

Come join us!

Pastors*Pam Fickenscher**John Quam***Children's Ministry***Julie Brehmer***Facility Manager***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***Nathan Knutson*

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Easter Flowers

The Chancel Guild is again taking orders for the Easter Garden. If you were unable to get a flowering plant ordered in March, they will still be taking orders on Sunday, April 6, between services.

You will have an opportunity to have your flowering plant given as a memorial, in honor of, or in celebration of Easter. A variety of plants will be available. Please pay when you place your order. The flowers will be labeled with your name behind the bow and may be taken home after the last service on Easter Sunday.



You may call Deb Christensen at 507-301-5561 if you have any questions or need to order by phone.