

# THE VOICE

OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Extending God's Love

December 2014

Volume 54, 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 15<sup>th</sup> of each month to:  
[office@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:office@stjohnsnorthfield.org).

For information, contact the Church Office:

**phone:** 507-645-4429

**fax:** 507-645-9633

**e-mail:**

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

**website:**

[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.



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

### Advent Fair

Wednesday, December 3, from 5:15 - 7:15 p.m.  
(see page 7 for additional information)

### Advent Vespers

Wednesdays, December 10 and 17, at 6:30 p.m.  
(see page 7 for additional information)

### Sunday School Christmas Program

Sunday, December 14, at 11:00 a.m. worship service  
(see page 7 for additional information)

### Lessons and Carols led by all Choirs

Sunday, December 21, at both worship services

### Intergenerational Event: Christmas Dinner Workshop

Sunday, December 21, between services  
(see page 7 for additional information)

### Christmas Eve

#### Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Vespers at 3:30 p.m. (especially for children and families)

Christmas Vespers at 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Candelight and Holy Communion at 11:00 p.m.

### Christmas Day

#### Thursday, December 25

Festive Christmas Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.

Christmas Dinner for All from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

### Christmas Hymn Sing with John Ferguson

#### Sunday, December 28

11:30 a.m.

**\*\*Please note that there will be only one worship service at 10:00 a.m.\*\***

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*

## The Gift of Silence

The seasons of Advent and Christmas are often filled with many opportunities to be with family and friends. During the busyness of this time of year, it is important to remember the value of listening to others. Along with listening, knowing when to be silent is equally important. Stephen Ministers are schooled in silence, trained to practice it, and to respect it.

The Stephen Minister's practice of silence extends to quieting the self while listening to the other speak—active listening, it is called, listening with ears and eyes and heart open and alert.

Stephen Ministers respect silence in others. They respect the care receiver's choice of what to tell and what to not to tell. They respect silences during a conversation and are

comfortable with them, knowing they allow space for emotion and reflection and understanding, for God's work of healing to take place in God's own time. Silence allows us to listen for the voice of God. During this time of year, consider the gift of silence in your life as you gather with family and friends in the days ahead.

If meeting with a Stephen Minister might be beneficial to you or to someone you know, contact one of the pastors (645-4429) or Joan Halvorson (645-8445).

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

*Matthew 5:4*

## Grief Support Ministry

### Northfield Grief Support Coalition:

All are invited to the First United Church of Christ for the "The Longest Night" celebration on Sunday, December 21, at 7:00 p.m.

**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."*

December 7, 2013  
**John Phillip Anderson**

December 10, 2013  
**Ruth Helgen**

# Pastors' Page

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A couple months ago at our weekly worship planning time, Nathan Proctor, John Schwehn and I looked at one another and realized *none of us here has been through a Christmas at St. John's before!* We are excited for the season ahead, but also realized we needed some collective wisdom from those who know St. John's treasured traditions around this special season. We were grateful for energetic conversation with the Worship and Arts Board and some guests in October as we looked ahead to this Advent and Christmas. We learned – not surprisingly – that St. John's loves this season yet always has room to try something new.

Christmas is perhaps the season when St. John's shines the best, because it is a time when the “world out there” pays attention to those things St. John's has never abandoned: rich musical tradition and the joy of congregational singing, generosity to neighbors far and near, and the gathering of all generations into celebration of Christ come among us. These are things St. John's does year-round; but at this time of year it all comes together in one beautiful, joyful, generous feast.

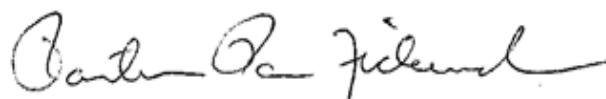
This year we invite you into all the season offers, and invite you to try something new as well:

- Join us for the Advent Fair on December 3; consider purchasing Fair Trade gifts; invite a neighbor or grandchild to join you for making crafts.
- Join us for VESPERs on December 10 and 17. At 6:30 p.m. we will have a brief and quiet service to help you re-focus on our true hope and expectation this season.
- Come hear the children lead us in the message of advent at the 11:00 a.m. service on Sunday December 14.
- Join us for Lessons and Carols led by all our choirs Sunday December 21.
- If you have small children in your clan, consider coming especially to the 3:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service. This service will be geared especially toward our youngest worshippers who come in high spirits and vibrating expectation on December 24!

And we invite you to remember those who need the larger community in order to truly feast this season:

- Early in the month, take a star from the Giving Tree and offer a gift for a local child or one of our mission partners around the world.
- Sign up to help prepare or serve our community Christmas meal on December 25!

We wish you a season full of the deepest hope and joy the Gospel offers: the presence of the Word made Flesh among us.



Join the  
worship staff  
for text study  
this season.  
Beginning  
Tuesday,  
Dec. 2,  
we will meet  
each Tuesday  
at 12:30 p.m.  
in the  
Fireside Room  
to study the  
texts for the  
next Sunday.

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

### **Sunday School Schedule**

- Dec. 7 Sunday School – Program Rehearsal
- Dec. 14 Sunday School – Christmas Program  
11:00 a.m. Worship Service
- Dec. 21 No Sunday School – Intergenerational  
Event in St. John's Hall, page 7
- Dec. 28 No Sunday School – *Christmas Break*

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

Wednesday, December 10  
6:00 – 6:45 p.m. in St. John's Hall

### **Sunday School Christmas Program**

Sunday, December 14, 11:00 a.m.  
Pre-service music starts at 10:45 a.m.

### **Christmas Break**

No Wednesday programming on December 24 & December 31  
No Sunday School on December 21 & December 28

### **4th and 5th Grade CAtechism resumes in January**

## **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 14. 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.

## **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.



## **Catechism for 4th and 5th graders will resume in January.**

CAT classes meet downstairs, 4th grade in the Undercroft and 5th grade in Room 20, from 4:15 – 4:45 p.m. Let me know if your child would like to ride the Wednesday afterschool bus to CAT!

## **Nursery Thank You!**

Thank you to our 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 students, Kari Heistad and Maddie Baloga. It is truly appreciated!

# YOUTH MINISTRY @ ST. JOHN'S

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## Gift Wrapping for Christmas Sharing



**When:** Wednesday, December 10th 6:45 – 8:00 p.m.

**Where:** Community Action Center

**What:** The Christmas Sharing Project is a program in which over 1,100 gifts are donated to children of families struggling financially. Phase one includes gathering donations which you'll see once the tree with stars in the Commons goes up and is quickly filled with donated presents. The CAC is also looking for 14 volunteers to wrap those donated gifts and/or buy the untaken stars on Wednesday night, December 10th. This is an excellent service project for families with high school students or to do as a Mentor/Mentee service project. If you're interested in helping out, please contact Mike at [youth@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:youth@stjohnsnorthfield.org)



## ELCA Youth Gathering: Fundraising Meeting

**When:** Monday, December 8th, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

**Where:** Youth Room

**What:** Parents and students planning on going to the **2015 Youth Gathering in Detroit** should come to this meeting to discuss the February Youth Fundraiser and additional fundraising options and goals. *All youth that are going are expected to participate in these fundraising activities.*

Anyone who missed the first informational meeting and would like additional resources, contact Mike at [youth@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:youth@stjohnsnorthfield.org)

### ADDITIONAL REMINDER:

**Wednesday, December 10th** is the first deadline for "Gathering" participants. A \$150 deposit will assure you a room and a spot on the bus next summer.

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

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### 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. Again this year there will be a time for rehearsal and fellowship the evening before Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 23. The Tuesday 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 Tuesday rehearsal, we will have a quick run-through of all the music at 10:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

### December Sunday Singing Schedule for Choirs

- December 7: (8:30) Chorale, Jubilate Schola; (11:00) Jubilate Schola
- December 14: (8:30) Chorale; (11:00) Sunday School Christmas Program
- December 21: (8:30) and (11:00) Lessons & Carols - All Choirs
- December 24: (3:30) Alleluia, Jubilate, Jubilate Schola  
(5:00) TBD  
(11:00) Laudate and Alumni
- December 25: (10:00) Everybody's Choir
- December 28: (10:00) No Choirs



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# Mission Outreach

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## The Giving Tree, Through December 5

The annual "Giving Tree" program sponsored by the Northfield Community Action Center will be set up in the Commons until December 5. 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 5. 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!

## 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 Church Office at [office@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:office@stjohnsnorthfield.org) or 645-4429.

## "Paying It Forward" . . . by grocery bagging?



Calling all youth in grades 4-9!!! On Saturday, December 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., we're heading down to Econo Foods to help bag groceries. **This is not meant to be a fundraiser**, but rather it's meant to encourage service by "Paying it Forward". What does that mean? Come and see! If we have enough youth sign up, we can divide the time into shifts. We also need adults and high school kids to help supervise. Sign up in the Commons or by talking with Mike Skunes or Julie Brehmer. This counts as a service project for those in confirmation!

# *Advent and Christmas at St. John's*

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## **Advent Fair! Wednesday, December 3**

You are invited to St. John's Advent Fair on Wednesday, December 3, in St. John's Hall. Enjoy dinner, the Fair Trade Fair, Advent shops, and activities for all ages. And, we encourage you to bring friends! The more the merrier!

Time: 5:15 p.m. – Wednesday Meal begins  
5:45 p.m. – Advent Fair shops open!



Contact Julie Brehmer if you have questions at [children@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:children@stjohnsnorthfield.org).

## **Advent Vespers Wednesdays, December 10 and 17, at 6:30 p.m.**

Join us as we prepare for Christ's coming.

We will have a brief and quiet service to help us re-focus on our true hope and expectation for this season.



## **St. John's Children's Christmas Program December 14**

Mark your calendars! St. John's Children's Christmas Program will be held on Sunday, Dec. 14 in St. John's Hall. The program, "The Light Before Christmas", a musical written by Joseph Martin, 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 call Julie Brehmer at 645-4429.

## **Mark your calendars for an Intergenerational Event Sunday, December 21, 9:45-10:45 (between services): Christmas Dinner Workshop!**

Elves of all ages are needed to decorate placemats, make table decorations and roll napkins for our St. John's Community Christmas Day Dinner. Come join in the Christmas spirit of helping others while enjoying some carols, cookies and camaraderie.

# October and November Actions

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## Deaths

Ivan Fagre, October 26, 2014  
Zachary Cramer, October 27, 2014  
Mary Falkenberg, October 27, 2014  
Donna Mae Plaggemeyer, November 9, 2014  
Jon Nicholson, November 21, 2014

## Baptisms

November 9, 2014, Aden Luckman,  
son of Anastacia Bouillez & Ryan Luckman

## Weddings

November 8, 2014, Elisabeth Granquist and Blaine Alderks  
November 15, 2014, Abbey Snesrud and Andrew Tussing

## Radio Broadcasts

November 2, 2014, given in memory of Leonard and Marie DeWolfe by the Leonard DeWolfe memorial fund.  
November 9, 2014, given by friends of St. John's.  
November 16, 2014, given by friends of St. John's.  
November 23, 2014, given in memory of Roger and Lee Mahacheck by Beverly Mahacheck.  
November 30, 2014, given in thanks for God's many blessings by Bob and Marilyn Matta.

# 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.*

*Sunday School (Lower Level) begins at 9:45 a.m. and Education Hour for adults begins at 9:50 a.m.*

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

### December 7:

*Coffee and Fellowship, St. John's Hall.*

*Sunday School (Pre-K thru Grade 5), Lower Level.*

*Life Groups (Grades 6-9) and Life Group Guides (Grades 10-12), St. John's Hall.*

*Forum: Liturgical Colors for the Church Year, St. John's Theater.*

### December 14:

*Coffee and Fellowship, Commons.*

*Sunday School (Pre-K thru Grade 5), St. John's Hall.*

*Life Groups (Grades 6-9) and Life Group Guides (Grades 10-12), St. John's Hall.*

*No Forum*

### December 21:

*No Sunday School or Life Groups - Christmas Break*

*Coffee and Fellowship, St. John's Hall.*

*Forum: History of Christmas, Sanctuary.*

### December 28:

*No Sunday School or Life Groups - Christmas Break*

*Coffee and Fellowship, 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).*



# News and Events

## 6th Annual Breakfast with Santa Sponsored by Area Preschools

Ho Ho Ho! Come join in the holiday fun at the 6th Annual Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 13th, at Bethel Lutheran Church. Kids can visit with Santa and his elves, make holiday ornaments and crafts, play reindeer games, write and mail letters to Santa, get their face painted and listen to wonderful holiday music performed by local children. For breakfast you'll enjoy buttermilk pancakes topped with wild blueberries, sausage, fresh fruit, a sweet surprise, orange juice and coffee.

Reservations are available for the 8:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. seating. Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$4 for kids 4-12 and children under 3 eat FREE. You may e-mail Amy at: [amyandbrent90@hotmail.com](mailto:amyandbrent90@hotmail.com) or call 507-645-1331 to make your reservations. Funds raised will benefit the student scholarship funds of Little Lambs Preschool, Northfield Nursery School, Open Door Preschool, and the Preschool of St. Dominic.

Thanks for your support. We look forward to seeing you at this important holiday event of the season!

## Accompany Team Being Formed for Spring 2015

This fall St. John's welcomed nine new households through our Accompany process, inviting prospective members into prayer and conversation around the Gospel each week with sponsors from the congregation. This small group experience puts the 'formation' part of joining a church in front of the 'information' of our structures and procedures, and brings the new faces in front of the worshipping community more than once for prayer and welcome.

This Lent we will offer another round of this experience, and we seek a few folks to be part of this new Welcoming Team:

- Individuals interested in acting as sponsors, coming alongside prospective members in small group conversation.
- Individuals acting as hospitality help - working to enable a warm and inviting space and coffee pots for Accompany sessions.
- One or two individuals willing to facilitate a group - not a teaching role, but people skilled at keeping conversation going.

Accompany will begin with "sample sessions" again in January, with participants and sponsors being matched in February for the beginning of Lent. Contact Pastor Fickenscher, Melissa Berthelsen or John Schwehn for more information.



## 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 3**  
Scalloped Potatoes with Ham

**Wednesday, December 10**  
Beef Stroganoff

**Wednesday, December 17**  
Chicken and Rice Hotdish

Free will offering appreciated!

# News and Events

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## Poinsettia Orders

The Chancel Guild will be taking orders for poinsettias between services on Sunday, December 7, and Sunday, December 14. If you would like to order a poinsettia in honor or memory of someone or in celebration of Christmas, stop in the Commons on either of the above referenced Sundays to sign up. The order form will also be available in the Church Office and on the website. The last day to have your order form in is Wednesday, December 17. The flowers will be used to decorate the church for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.



## A Message from the Treasurer

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Thank you for your generous support this year of St. John's and its mission here in the community and the world. As we approach the end of this fiscal year, I thought this might be a good time to provide an update on some of the ways your tithes have been used, and to focus your attention on challenges and opportunities we face as we approach the new year.

As of October 31 of this year, our congregation has:

- increased its gifts to operating income by three percent over last year's gifts received at this same time;
- given over thirteen percent of the income received to acts of benevolence here at home, within our greater community, and throughout the world;
- spent about thirteen percent of its operating income maintaining, heating, and illuminating a large physical plant during a year that included a record cold spring;
- successfully and happily concluded our call process for a senior pastor and our search for a director of music;
- used a generous bequest to engage in a major tuck-pointing project, maintaining this edifice as a gift to pass on to those who will follow us;
- devoted significant resources to equip an educational program for our children and youth, to send young campers off for faith-enriching experiences around campfires throughout the state, to host Wednesday night suppers and gatherings to enhance the community that is this congregation, to staff and supply a nursery, and to celebrate the confirmation of youth in their faith;
- provided financial support towards the cultivation of a worship and arts program that inspires contemplation of the transcendent, even as it celebrates the beauty and diversity of artistic expression;
- faithfully proclaimed the gospel and celebrated the sacraments.

In accomplishing this mission, church staff, council and boards have attempted to be careful stewards of the gifts of financial resources entrusted to them. Indeed, as of October 31, we have kept our spending proportionate to our budget. With 83% of the year behind us, we have spent 82% of our budgeted expenses.

That said, we still approach the end of the calendar year with some concerns. While spending is proportionate to our budget, giving, while generous, is somewhat behind budget. That is to say, even though we have *spent* 82% of our budgeted expenses, we have only *received* 78% of our budgeted income.

All this is perhaps a long way of saying that your careful stewardship of your pledge is important; that your pledge allows St. John's to fulfill its mission faithfully; and that your continued attention to this pledge is gratefully appreciated as we complete this calendar year.

Yours in Christ,  
Rebecca P. Judge

# From the Stewardship Board

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*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.*

Thank you for your gifts of service and resources throughout this calendar year. You have given countless hours of coffee-making, quilting, repairing, teaching, cooking, music-making, raking, painting, number-crunching, planning, baking, visiting, serving, speaking, organizing, communicating, beautifying, advocating, sewing, greeting, studying, worshipping, gathering in fellowship. You have filled backpacks and sewed quilt squares. You have cleaned roadways and hosted visitors. With intention you have looked for opportunities to share compassion and welcome. You have shared from your abundance and in so doing you have put others' needs before your own. You have lived into your call. Our work continues in the new year. Much will be asked of us *and* we are equipped with abilities sufficient to meet the needs we encounter. We do all of these things in the name of Christ.

With appreciation,  
Melissa Berthelsen, Stewardship Board Chair

## *From the Budget Committee*

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### **Budget Committee Update November 11, 2014**

Our Budget Committee has been diligently planning for the 2015 St. John's budget to be presented at the Annual Meeting in January. It is exciting to anticipate fulfilling these areas of mission and ministry we are so passionate about at St. John's! To date, we have: reached a major decision concerning staff benefit packages, received board requests for each of their yearly budgets, and begun to look at pledge totals from Stewardship Sunday.

Benefits costs for staff through the ELCA benefits services are increasing in 2015, with an average of 11% increase for health care and 2.5% increase for disability coverage. After consultation with staff and the Personnel Committee, we have reached a decision about 2015 coverage agreeable to all.

Chairpersons from each board submitted proposals for their yearly budgets. Committee members will be reviewing each proposal and individually contacting chairpersons for further clarification.

Your pledges and support are so appreciated in this process of predicting the needs for our congregation in the coming year! Two staff positions to be filled and budgeted for in the not-so-distant future, we hope, will be Shared Ministry and Associate Pastor. St. John's has also received notification of a City of Northfield street assessment of \$28,000. The Budget Committee, along with Council and Executive Committee will be discerning how to pay for this. Options to consider might be: payment from a reserve fund (in one lump sum, thus avoiding interest payments), accepting the 6% city loan-available over a ten year period, or, perhaps, choosing to finance on our own by seeking a better loan rate. (We welcome your thoughts and input regarding this decision).

We feel confident in our process and encouraged by your generous activism.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Patsy Ophaug (President-elect/Chair), Kathy Granquist, Mark Ulmer, Melissa Berthelsen, Rebecca Judge,  
Troy Sorensen, Pastor Pam Fickenscher

# 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.

## Accompany

Contact: *Pastor Pam* 645-4429

## Bold Cafe-Women of the ELCA

Contact: *Christy Hall-Holt* 664-0213  
*Anita Hellie* 301-3609

## Circle Bible Studies-Women of the ELCA

Contact: *Jane Gelle* 645-8507  
*Genevieve Quarberg* 645-0089

## Connections

Contact: *Carol Schoen* 645-6840

## Grief Support

Contact: *Naomi Mandsager Bartley* 403-3394

## Knitters-Women of the ELCA

Contact: *Kathy Vang* 645-4397  
*Delores Mickelsen* 645-8101

## Life Issues in Scripture

Contact: *Dick Beckmen* 645-3882

## Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Contact: *Gary Knutson* 663-1522

## Mens Time Out

Contact: *Greg Kneser* 663-0271

## Peace and Justice

Contact: *Judith Stoutland* 645-7842

## Prayer and Praise

Contact: *Mary White* 645-4783

## Quilters-Women of the ELCA Quilters

Contact: *Kathy Vang* 645-4849

## Women's Breakfast Group-Women of the ELCA

Contact: *Kathy Mellstrom* 663-1451

## We Need the Light

*By Barbara Eaves*

As December arrives, we enter the darkest time of the year for those of us who live in the northern areas of the United States. At our house, there is a sprinkle of melancholy as we anticipate the long, dark months of winter.

When our children were young we took them to tour a large cave. In the deepest part of the cave our tour guide wanted us to experience absolute darkness, so after suggesting everyone be near a railing or someone to hold onto, she turned off the lights in the cavern. In a matter of seconds, our son grabbed his dad's hand and nervously whispered, "I need the light."

And so in winter we turn to light...the warm glow of a lamp, the dancing light of a fireplace, the flickering of candles. More than simply warming and brightening dark spaces, light also carries with it subtle glimmers of hope, promise, and possibility.

While we await the One whose light dispels all darkness and ushers in rays of wondrous grace, we pray that the light of Christ may dwell in us richly so that we, too, may be bearers of the light to those who are in need of comfort, assurance, and hope.

Stay with us, Lord Jesus, stay with us.

Stay with us, it soon is evening.

Stay with us, Lord Jesus, stay with us,

It soon is evening, and night is falling.

Jesus Christ the world's true light!

Shine so the darkness cannot overcome it!

Stay with us, Lord Jesus, it soon is evening.

Stay with us, Lord Jesus, for night is falling.

Let your light pierce the darkness

And fill your church with its glory.

(Luke 24:29 and Phos Hilaron, tr. Gracia Grindal from Egil Hovland's, *Stay With Us*)

*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)

Deb Seitz, 301-3526,  
[deborah.seitz@nfl.d.k12.mn.us](mailto:deborah.seitz@nfl.d.k12.mn.us)

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

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

## Small Groups

Pick up a 2014-2015 catalog at the Small Group bulletin board display to see the groups that are being offered. Contact names are listed in the catalog along with a brief description of each group and the details of when and where they gather.

If you would like to participate in a small group on a particular topic, please visit with a member of the Small Group Team listed in a box on the left side of this page.



## 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 from "Gather" for 2014-2015 is "Transformation and Conversion: Transforming Life and Faith" by Carol Schersten LaHurd  
December's Topic: "Faith in the Family"

### December

**Dec. 8: Bible Study Leaders** meet at 12:00 noon in the Fireside Room.

**Dec. 2 and 16: Knitters** meet at 9:00 a.m. at the home of Kathy Vang 507-645-4849.

**Dec. 10, 11, 12, 13: Circles** meet. *See time and location below.*

**Dec. 15 and 18: Quilters** meet in the Fellowship Hall from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

**No December WELCA Board Meeting**

### We are invited...

**Dec. 4: Thursday at 5:30 p.m. St. Peter's Fellowship Hall, Northfield.** We are invited to "We Wish for a Merry Christmas"-Advent Gathering to celebrate the start of the Advent season and our shared love for Christ! The evening will include dinner, guest speaker Pastor Janet White and Christmas Carols set in a candlelit wonderland. A sign-up sheet is on the WELCA bulletin board so they have an idea of how many will be coming.

### January St. Olaf King's Room

Mark your calendars for **Thursday, January 8 at 11:30 am** for lunch in the King's Room. Full buffet is \$14.00. Soup/salad/dessert is \$10.00. Beverage, tax, and tip are included in the prices. Please have your money/check payable to WELCA ready to give to treasurer Barb Walters who will pay the bill. Sign up on the WELCA bulletin board by January 4.

### Bold Café

A new group of young women is in the process of getting organized to discuss the articles from *Boldcafé* an e-zine for young women. Watch for information about this new *Bold Café* Group. Interested in the magazine? Go to [www.boldcafe.org](http://www.boldcafe.org). Questions or ideas? Contact Christy Hall-Holt at [christy.hallholt@gmail.com](mailto:christy.hallholt@gmail.com), 664-0213, or Sara Redetzke at [srednorth@charter.net](mailto:srednorth@charter.net), 301-3599.

### Fair Trade Coffee and Chocolate Sales to Continue

Dawn Tommerdahl is going to be managing the free trade coffee and chocolate sales. Thank you, Dawn.

### Circle Meetings for December:

**Wednesday, Dec.10:** **Lydia** 10:00 at Anita Hellie's 1129 Heritage Dr. 301-3601

**Sarah** 9:30 at Solveig Bailey's 1906 Lincoln Street South 645-2496

**Thursday, Dec. 11:** **Elizabeth** Noon at Jo Kleber's 616 Meldahl Lane 645-8330

**Abigail/Rebecca** 2:00 at NRC Parkview E. Contact: Lois Wrede 663-9002

**Martha/Claudia** 11:30 King's Room at St. Olaf. Contact: Marilyn Jacobson 663-9060

**Friday, Dec. 12:** **Mary** 12:30 at Jo Olson's 516 South Bridge Dr. 321-1091

**Saturday, Dec.13:** **Women's Breakfast Group** 8:30 Fireside Room Contact: Kathy Melstrom 663-1451

Submit items for the **Voice** to Anita Hellie ([ahellie@charter.net](mailto:ahellie@charter.net))

Submit information for the **Sunday Bulletin** to Mary Hoff ([jpmhof@msn.com](mailto:jpmhof@msn.com))



# From Bread For the World

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We are making such progress in fighting hunger, both here in the United States and around the world. We now have strategies for ending childhood hunger as states use school-based programs combined with the private efforts of the faith community and other local organizations to make sure kids are surrounded by better nutrition and information about healthy eating.

Meanwhile we are seeing serious progress in combating malnutrition and famine globally with strong leadership from Bread for the World. We won't quite meet the ambitious targets set out in the original Millennium Development Goals, but as work begins on the next round of targets for global development, hunger and malnutrition seem to be at the top of the list for world leaders.

Those are things to celebrate. When there are moments when political right and left come together on an agenda, the church should be there to say "Amen!" And people of faith can help build trusting relationships that will allow leaders to work through their differences on the way to real progress and solutions. That's what public theology can bring to a dispirited national government.

*Mike McCurry, former White House press secretary to President Bill Clinton, distinguished professor of public theology at Wesley Theological Seminary, supporter of Bread for the World.*

## **Thank You on Behalf of the Bread for the World Committee**

If you were sitting at a table in St. John's Hall between services on Sunday, October 26, you've already heard this message: During the month of October, members of St. John's church wrote 159 letters to our US Representative and Senators asking them to support the "Food for Peace Reform Act" of 2014. And if you were in church that Sunday morning, you saw those letters presented as part of our offering. (Don't let anyone say you belong to a do-nothing congregation!) If this bill passes, it will save enough money on shipping costs alone to feed an additional 9 million hungry people. Because those hungry people won't be able to thank you, we on the Bread for the World committee will: Thank you, St. John's; thank you very much!

## **Attitudes, Understanding, Justice, Gender-Based Violence**

After some postponement, a consideration of gender-based violence is now being considered for a social message for the ELCA. A draft of the message has been prepared; comments have been sought by the staff and consultants for revising the text.

In April and May of 2014 this revision was reported to the Church Council and discussion followed during the summer. Finished by September 25, the Draft was posted for public comment until Thanksgiving. Pastor Pam is one of those invited to work out ways of dealing with various parts of the text.

In February and March of 2015 the proposed Social Message on Gender-based Violence will be reviewed by the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council. At the meeting on April 10-12, it will be considered for adoption by the Church Council. The final text will then be posted online. In the summer the Social message will be printed in both English and Spanish.

The topic is of importance to all members of the church. You are invited to study it - by yourself or with others. In January we will offer opportunities for those interested in a wider consideration to talk about it. If you would like to organize/lead this, please contact Pastor Pam or Judith Stoutland.

Here are some resources with further information:

<http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Current-Social-Writing-Projects/Gender-Violence#sthash.xFptLhds.dpuf>

On the ELCA website: [Women and Justice Page](#) and [Theological Discernment Resource Page](#).



## From the Peace and Justice group...

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**The Peace & Justice Group does not meet during December. In 2015, we will continue our work on food security, immigration issues, criminal justice reform, violence/nonviolence, and things that come up.**

### Safe Journeys, Saving Journeys

It's an old story: Family of mother, father, and child flee from oppression and violence to a safer neighboring country. Refugees, they stay until word comes that things are safer and they can return to their homeland.

We do not know if there were others that also sought refuge in Egypt or another country during that time, but we do know that through the centuries since then people and groups of people have sought refuge among strangers. It is estimated that today there are more than 50 million people displaced from their homes, some within their home countries, some in other countries. Some in the United States, in Minnesota, in Northfield. At this time of year, we hear the details of today in the echo of that ancient story.

There is agreement that the needs of the people are great; there are differences of opinion as to how we should, or can, respond. The situation requires combined efforts. Through the years the Lutheran Church has worked effectively to do what was possible through Lutheran Relief, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, Lutheran Disaster Relief and through supporting national legislation that works to ease the suffering and meet basic needs for persons involved.

This year through generous bequests, the congregational budget, and individual gifts, St. Johns has been able to support these groups - and therefore more refugees - beyond our usual amounts.

At the end of November US groups were working on national legislation to address the conditions that are causing families - and especially the children - to flee their home countries. The funding requested would support programs that promote economic development, repatriation and reintegration efforts for children returned to home countries, services for at-risk young people and that work to improve governance in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador (the countries with the greatest number of refugees at this time).

Also included in the legislation are provisions to address the poverty, lack of educational and employment opportunities, and the high rates of criminal gang activity that are driving children to flee to the US.

It is absolutely essential that the basic needs of food and shelter are provided to the vulnerable refugees. It is also extremely important to fund programs and initiatives addressing the causes and problems of hunger, violence, and poverty. Such actions will enhance the possibility of a more promising and hopeful future for these children and all of God's children.

Our opportunity is to provide and to advocate.

For more information, google Lutheran Relief and Immigration Services, Lutheran Relief, and Advocacy on the ELCA web page.

**Senior Pastor**  
*Pam Fickenscher*  
**Visitation Pastor**  
*John Quam*  
**Pastoral Intern**  
*John Schwehn*  
**Children's Ministry**  
*Julie Brehmer*  
**Facility Manager**  
*Tim Byers*  
**Financial Manager**  
*Bernie Renander*  
**Music Ministry**  
*Nathan Proctor*  
**Music Staff**  
*Carol Benson - Alleluia*  
*Cathy Rodland - Jubilate*  
*& Jubilate Schola*  
*Zack Pelletier - Rejoice*  
*Ringers*  
**Office Manager**  
*Leah Garlie*  
**Parish Nurse**  
*Lynette Marks*  
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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 Wednesday, 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

***Friday, December 19***

Please get the reports in on time!