

# THE VOICE

OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Extending God's Love

January 2015

Volume 55, Number 1

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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.

## St. Olaf Choir Sings Here January 4

We welcome the St. Olaf Choir and its director, Dr. Anton Armstrong, to worship services on Sunday, January 4. This is a long-standing and deeply beloved tradition at St. John's as we welcome the choir back to the place of its birth and as we are blessed by their wonderful leadership and music.

A reception in honor of the choir will be held between services in St. John's Hall. Please take the opportunity to welcome the St. Olaf Choir back to St. John's!



## Partner of the Month (from elca.org)

*Where do St. John's benevolence offerings go? Each month we will feature a mission partner. This month meet Lutheran Disaster Response, which receives a portion of our monthly gifts to the SE Minnesota Synod.*

Lutheran Disaster Response brings God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

[In response to Typhoon Haiyan in 2013], Lutheran Disaster Response received an outpouring of prayers and financial support. More than \$2.5 million was collected to directly respond to Typhoon Haiyan. Together, we were able to provide immediate need to people and communities affected, and we continue to walk with our brothers and sisters in the Philippines who are still working to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

Lutheran Disaster Response works with an extensive network of partners who are actively engaged with communities on the ground. Within days after the typhoon made landfall our trusted partner, Lutheran World Relief, was responding to those affected. And a year later, we are still there, continuing our work with Lutheran World Relief and working with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines.

See more at: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/Our-Impact/Pacific-Typhoon#sthash.X5emifoA.dpuf>

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*

## Learning to Let Go

Take a breath, a deep breath. You made it to 2015. Think back, think back and smile. Christmas came! Did you experience God's love with family and friends? Probably. Did you sense God's grace in a middle-of-the-night bit of planning or in the peaceful light of altar candles? Perhaps. Did you share that love and grace with someone? Very likely. Was everything perfect? No.

Each January we pack away Christmas and move into another year. We start fresh and make a resolution or two—either out loud or quietly to ourselves. (This year I will get my finances in order. This year we will have that family reunion. This year I will forgive \_\_\_\_\_ and accept forgiveness from \_\_\_\_\_.) Notice that we do this every year. We need to start fresh every year. Why? We lived, imperfectly, another 12 months. We are humans, after all—but we are beloved humans who are offered not only the gift of a fresh new year, but the gift of a fresh new day - every day.

The challenge that comes with the “fresh new” is the ability to let go of the regretful past. In order to receive the possibilities of a new year and a new today, we must let go of the disappointments and missed opportunities of yesterday. Learning to let go grows out of a confidence that God's love is available to every one of us. Learning to let go is a discipline of faith, a grace-laden skill to develop. How? Think back, think back and smile. God came, God is with us, and God will be with us always! Take a breath, a deep breath. You are here in 2015!

If you or someone you know is struggling to let go and would benefit from a Stephen Minister, please contact a pastor 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:

A grief support group meets on Mondays beginning on January 5 from 3:00-4:00 p.m. at the Three Links Care Center. For more information contact Pr. Kristine Bratten-Lee, 507-664-3478.

**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.”*

January 14, 2014

**June Swanson**

January 21, 2014

**Myrtle Nord**

January 21, 2014

**Kevin Heiberg**

# Pastors' Page

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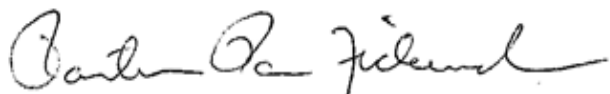
Five years ago on my daughter's November birthday, I started one of those "line a day" 5 year journals. At the end of 2014 I have been reminded how much of my life at St. John's and in Northfield was still a mystery to me twelve months ago. I noted in that journal the day you called me as your pastor, the day we first saw the house we now live in, and meetings with staff members who are now people I see every day. It is more clear to me than ever that none of this work we call ministry even begins without faith that God is leading.

One year later, I'm excited that not everything in 2015 will be a "first." All of your faces —and most of your names — are familiar to me now, and behind those faces I now know many of your stories. We have been through some joys and sorrows together as a community, and both the gifts and challenges of this place are more familiar.

2015 will still have plenty of newness. This month we welcome a new staff member as Christy Hall-Holt begins work as our Shared Ministry Coordinator. Many of you will begin new tasks as you join boards or become new member sponsors. New faces will join us and we will celebrate new births. And, God willing, some time this year a new Associate Pastor will be called and installed at St. John's!

A pastor I know who spent over thirty years in the same parish once said, "I don't know why anyone feels the need to change calls. The church is always changing. Congregations never stay the same. There is always something new!" I'm not sure everyone can sustain his enthusiasm quite so well over decades, but it is an attitude I admire. God is indeed constantly making all things new.

If your spiritual life ever feels stale, I challenge you to do one thing new this month: say yes to a church task you haven't tried before; greet a person you've never met before; enter by a different doorway; go downstairs if you haven't witnessed our kids' programming, or check out an adult forum if you've never done that; come to a Wednesday night meal; pick up a daily devotional or read the texts for the coming Sunday. Within the circles of this congregation is a world of opportunity for growth, mission, and relationship. The Lord holds this new year in gracious hands.



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

#### **Sunday School Schedule**

January 4      Sunday School  
January 11     Sunday School  
January 18     Sunday School  
January 25     Sunday School (*Camp Sunday*)  
February 5     Sunday School (*Teacher Appreciation*)

#### **4th and 5th Grade CAT Resumes**

Wednesday, January 7, 4:15-4:45 p.m.

#### **Bowling for 2nd - 5th Grades**

Monday, January 19 (No School Day), 12:30-2:00 p.m.

#### **Camp Sunday, 3rd - 5th Grade**

Sunday, January 25, 9:45-10:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall

#### **Teacher Appreciation Brunch**

Sunday, February 4, 9:45 a.m., Fireside Room

#### **3rd Grade CAT Retreat**

Wednesday, February 1, 4:45-6:00 p.m.  
The Sacrament of Baptism

### **Toddler Time!**

Children who are 2 going on 3 years old, along with their parents, are invited to a special, "Toddler Time" on Sunday, January 11! Feel free to come to our Sunday School Opening at 9:45 a.m. in Fellowship Hall (lower level). Toddler Time will follow at 10:00 a.m. in Room 20. Your little ones will enjoy music, Bible stories, games, puppets; a wonderful time for parents and children to get to know one another! Rachel Skunes will be leading this program. Please feel free to contact Julie Brehmer if you have questions.

### **Time to think about Summer Camp!**

On Sunday, January 25, 3rd-8th graders are invited to Fellowship Hall to hear about St. John's summer camp options for 2015. Parents - come and learn more about camp with your child!

We will be meeting during the Sunday school hour, 9:45-10:45 a.m.

### **4th and 5th Grade CAT Resumes in January**

4th and 5th graders resume Catechism classes starting on Wednesday, January 7. CAT classes will meet in the lower level of St. John's; 4th grade in Room 19 and 5th grade in the Undercroft from 4:15-4:45 p.m. on the following Wednesdays in January: 7, 14, 21, 28.

### **Third Grade Catechism Retreat**

Third graders, along with their parent(s), will meet Wednesday, February 4 from 4:45-6:00 p.m. for a Catechism retreat on the Sacrament of Baptism (Room to be determined). If you are unable to attend, please call Pastor Pam or Julie Brehmer at 645-4429.

### **Let's Go Bowling!**

Monday, January 19, is a NO SCHOOL DAY so we're heading to the bowling alley!



**Who:** Grades 2-5, Friends are always welcome!

**Where:** Jesse James Lanes, Hwy 3, Nfld

**Time:** 12:30-2:00 p.m.

**Cost:** \$10.00 (2 games & shoe rental)

Please sign up on the bulletin board in the Commons or downstairs by the Nursery. Parents: Please drop off and pick up your child(ren) at the bowling alley. If they need a ride or financial assistance to participate, give Julie a call at 645-4429. Parent or high school chaperones are needed!

### **Children's Ministry Appreciation Brunch!**

Children's ministry volunteers are invited to brunch on Sunday, February 1 at 9:45 a.m. in the Fireside Room. More information will be coming your way!

**Please contact Julie if you can help with the brunch by serving, bringing an egg bake or bake treats (muffins, rolls, breads...). Thanks in advance!**



# YOUTH MINISTRY @ ST. JOHN'S

## NAYW Ski-Night

**When:** Saturday, January 17th 2:30-11:00pm

**Where:** Welch Village (bus leaves from Bethel)

**Who:** 6th Grade through Adults

**What:** Our annual ski-trip to Welch Village is right around the corner. Transportation and dinner will be provided by Northfield Area Youth Workers (NAYW). Its \$10 to cover the bus and food, \$25 for a lift ticket, and \$10 for rentals. If you have a season pass or your own downhill equipment, you can pay for only what you need. *Parents- we need one or two chaperones from each church and this is a really great event to join your youth on!* You can sign up by emailing Mike at [youth@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:youth@stjohnsnorthfield.org) or on the wall outside the youth room.



## Camp Sunday!

**When:** Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup> (During the Education Hour)

**Where:** Youth Room/Fellowship Hall

**Who:** 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Graders and Parents

**What:** It's time to get excited about camp at Green Lake/Shores of St. Andrews next summer! We'll talk about why going to camp is great, when we're going, and how we can make it a fun and affordable experience. We also will hopefully have some former camp counselors and other representatives here to answer questions and give kids a taste of camp.

## Youth Fundraiser!

**When:** Sunday, February 8th 8:00-11:00am

**Where:** St. John's Hall

**Who:** For Everyone at St. John's (but put on by Youth)

**What:** In effort to defray costs for Summer Activities such as the **2015 ELCA Youth Gathering in Detroit, Camp, and Magical Mystery Tours**, we are running a silent auction and breakfast for the congregation. Youth are encouraged to donate their time by helping serve breakfast and talents by donating items or services to the silent auction. Watch for a letter in the mail detailing how you can help!



### Coming Up Next Month:

- 2/08 Youth Fundraiser  
(6-12 Youth and Parents)
- 2/20 Faith & Family Night w/ the Minnesota Timberwolves  
(All Ages)
- 2/27 Wapo Winter Get-Away (Confirmation Retreat 6-9)



**St. John's Annual  
Youth Fundraiser  
Sunday, February 8**

***Join us Sunday, February 8 for our  
Annual Youth Fundraiser in St. John's Hall!***

**8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.** Silent Auction with a *Buy It Now!* Option

**9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.** Pancake Breakfast (\$6/person, \$24/family)

***This annual event raises funds to help make our 2015 summer programming opportunities financially possible for all families***

**Our youth will be taking "Road Trips" to:  
*Green Lake Bible Camp in Spicer, MN  
Shores of St. Andrews Bible Camp in New London, MN  
and***

***ELCA Youth Gathering in Detroit, MI***



***The Silent Auction needs your help!***

***Can you or your business provide an item or service for our Silent Auction?***

***If so, please contact Julie Brehmer at St. John's, 645-4429 or email;***

***[children@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:children@stjohnsnorthfield.org). Thanks!***



# ST. JOHN'S SUMMER 2015



## Preschool 1 – Grade 5

Vacation Bible School  
For Preschool 1 – Kindergarten  
“On the Road”  
For Grades K-5

Both VBS and “On the Road” are held the same week in August. Volunteers from Northfield area churches provide VBS programming for Pre-K. Good Earth Village provides “On the Road” programming for K-5th graders. It’s a fantastic week for children in the community.

**\$10/child; \$20/family**  
Registration information will be available in the spring.

## Grades 2-5

“Andy’s Gang”,  
Shores of St. Andrews,  
New London, MN

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

**June 21 – 26, \$410/Camper**  
**\$10 discount – register by 3/10**  
**\$15 discount for siblings**

## Grade 6-8

Chrysalis Crew, Spicer, MN  
Chrysalis Crew is held at Green Lake Bible Camp. Be a part of the fun adventures and faith-filled experiences during this awesome week of summer camp!

**June 21 – 26, \$410/Camper**  
**\$10 discount – register by 3/10**  
**\$15 discount for siblings**



## Grades 6-8

Magical Mystery Tours!  
Northfield area church youth come together for a mystery event once a month during the summer.

**More information will be mailed to families this summer.**



Annual Youth Fundraiser  
The Youth Fundraiser helps defray the cost of summer programs for all youth attending. The fundraiser will be held on Sunday, February 8.

**6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders** have the opportunity to raise additional funds when they help with the Easter Breakfast.

Information will be mailed to you on how you can participate.

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

[youth@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:youth@stjohnsnorthfield.org)  
[children@stjohnsnorthfield.org](mailto:children@stjohnsnorthfield.org)



## Grades 9-12

ELCA Youth Gathering  
Detroit, MI

Join us on our way to Detroit as we meet up with over 9,000 other Lutheran youth for a couple days of worship, service, growth, and holy play. We'll hear from nationally renowned speakers and bands while also getting a chance to serve our brothers and sisters in Detroit.

**Talk with Mike Skunes if you're interested in attending.**

## SUMMER FOR ALL AGES FAMILY CAMPS!

Check out family camp opportunities at Green Lake Lutheran Ministries [www.glim.org](http://www.glim.org), or Good Earth Village [www.goodearthvillage.org](http://www.goodearthvillage.org)

## LUTHERAN NIGHT AT THE TWINS

Sign up to watch the Twins play at Target Field this summer. This event is organized by Thrivent – watch for info this summer.

## THRIVENT BUILDS WITH HABITAT

Help build a Habitat for Humanity home! Our church will have a Saturday this summer where those that are 18 and older will be invited to work on the site or provide food. More info to come!

## FAMILY NIGHT AT THE NORTHFIELD POOL!

Free food and so much fun! This event is during the week of VBS and “On the Road” in August.

**AS ADULTS** we need you to encourage our young people to be intentional about their faith journey all through the year. Ask them which program they're going to – but also ask them about Sunday School, Wednesday programs, Confirmation and activities they attend throughout the week!





St. John's is excited to announce that Christy Hall-Holt will be joining our staff as Shared Ministry Coordinator beginning January 5. This part-time position, previously held by Joanne Sommers, will focus on helping every member of the congregation share their time and talent, with a special focus on the hospitality functions of our life as a community together.

### **Greetings from our new Shared Ministry Coordinator...**

Being a part of St. John's family is like coming home for me. I am a "grafted-in" Lutheran. Olaf, my husband, and his family of Norwegian (and a little Swedish!) descent have shared with me their nourishing cultural and spiritual heritage. After my birth in Kenya and a year in Idi Amin's Uganda (1972) I grew up in Ghana, West Africa, with multiple trips through Europe back to the States for furloughs. I feel like a "cultural mutt"! The years we've spent here in Northfield, with the warmth and welcome of St. John's, have been a source of continuity and stability.

One of the most significant ways I have grown to feel part of the St. John's community was through serving on the Children's Ministry board. Our daughters, Viveka (14) and Annelise (10) have been the beneficiaries of the solid education of our catechism and confirmation programs. I enjoy working with Julie Brehmer and the 4th and 5th graders on Wednesday afternoons with the DOG (Discovering Our Gifts) program. I joined the St. John's Chorale a year ago, and I enjoy taking a turn caring for little ones in the nursery during Sunday service. In July this year I attended the Women of the ELCA Triennial and came back excited to reach out to women of my generation at St. John's through the Women of the ELCA's Bold Café small group discussion and community (see [www.boldcafe.org](http://www.boldcafe.org))

I have worked outside the home most recently as international student advisor at St. Olaf College (2010 - 2013). In earlier professional life, after graduating with a master's degree in international education, I worked as a management and employee development trainer in California at Hewlett-Packard (1998 - 2002). In the interim between working at St. Olaf and Hewlett-Packard, I focused on caring for our family during Olaf's two years as a research fellow in Stony Brook, NY, and as he transitioned into his career as a professor of computer science at St. Olaf.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to work with all of you as Shared Ministry Coordinator. One of my favorite things to do is meet new people, find out what is important to them, and help introduce them to others so they feel welcome. Another passion I have is to learn and grow spiritually alongside others. I am looking forward to putting these interests to use at St. John's. I invite you to share your ideas and vision for how our shared ministries can continue to thrive. Let's grow together!

Peace,

Christy

*SERVING TO LOVE*  *LOVING TO SERVE*

### **Annual Meeting Potluck Kitchen Coordinator and Volunteers Needed**

Prior to St. John's Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 25th, the congregation will share in a potluck meal. Please bring a dish to share! If you are available on this day to serve as a kitchen coordinator please contact Christy. A kitchen coordinator is primarily responsible for delegating tasks and serving as "point person" for the rest of the volunteer crew. Volunteers are needed to help with set up (11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.), serving (11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.) and clean up (12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m.). If you can help in any of these ways please contact let us know!



## *Notes of Thanks!*

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**Thank you to all the volunteers who made the Advent Fair a special night!** Special thanks to our cooks, Peggy Dell, Kristy Harms, and Linda Anderson, to Katherine Norrie and Jill Enestvedt for organizing the crafts, and to Jane Rinehart and Kristy Wermager for organizing the Fair Trade Fair.

**Thanks to St. John's youth who came to bag groceries at Econofoods!** The twist was that instead of asking money from people as a fundraiser, St. John's kids bagged groceries and then handed out \$5 bills attached to a card listing various charitable organizations as a way to be of service and to encourage people in the community to be a blessing to someone during Christmas. Students encountered various reactions of excitement, appreciation and confusion upon receiving the gift. St. John's received many positive comments from the community.

**Thank you to all the children who participated in the Sunday School Christmas Program!** You did such a great job and it was a wonderful worship service.

**Thank you to everyone who helped with the Sunday School Christmas Program!** Thank you to the Sunday School teachers, the choir directors, and all of our musicians; to Judy Swanson for creating the Advent banner, and to Brian Evenson and Tim Byers for their help with the set. And, thank you parents, for supporting our Children's programming at St. John's. **A very special thank you to Jenny Pelletier, Sue Brockman, and Frances Boehning, our Christmas Program Team!**

**Thank you to everyone who donated gifts to the Giving Tree this year!** Special thanks to our 3rd-5th grade Wednesday kids for helping with the stars!

**Thank you, thank you, thank you!** From all of us on the committee, Thank You for your contributions of food and time to make the 2014 Community Christmas Dinner such a great success. Without your help this event would never happen. It is always such a joy and blessing to look out over St. John's Hall on Christmas Day and see so many enjoying such a wonderful home cooked meal. This is a great gift to the community.

**Thank you to our Funeral Team** who did wonders of hospitality in a very busy season this fall.

## *November and December Actions*

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### **Deaths**

Ginny Shaw, November 22, 2014

Dorothy Langeness, December 18, 2014

Bernard "Benny" Blanness, December 11, 2014

Ivan Plaggemeyer, December 20, 2014

Steve Edwins, December 14, 2014

### **Radio Broadcasts**

December 7, 2014, given by Judy Christensen in memory of Dagny Christensen and Leslie Gustafson who shared a Dec. 1 birthday.

December 14, 2014, given by Curtis and Karen Swenson in honor of their parents.

December 21, 2014, given by Shirley Falck in memory of John Falck.

December 24, 2014 (5:00 p.m.), given in memory of Eugene Schrader by family and friends.

December 25, 2014, given by friends of St. John's.

December 28, 2014, given by friends of St. John's.

# *Learning and Fellowship*

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## **Sunday Learning and Fellowship in January**

*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.*

### **January 4:**

*Reception for St. Olaf Choir ~ 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.*

*No Forum*

### **January 11:**

*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: St. John's Columbarium - Planning for Yourself and Others, St. John's Hall.*

### **January 18:**

*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: Annual Meeting Preview, St. John's Hall.*

*Bold Cafe, Fireside Room.*

*Accompany Sample Session, Undercroft.*

### **January 25:**

*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: Social Justice & International Issues, Sanctuary.*

*Accompany Sample Session, Undercroft.*



# News and Events

## Annual Meeting is Sunday, January 25



The Congregation Council has set Sunday, January 25, as the date for the Annual Meeting of St. John's Lutheran Church, immediately following a potluck dinner in St. John's Hall starting at noon. Items of business will include receiving of reports, election of officers, board, and council members, and action on the proposed 2015 budget.

The preview of the Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 18 between services in St. John's Hall.

## Acknowledging 54 Years of Service to St. John's

Elvin Heiberg retired on December 21 from his role as usher captain at St. John's, after 54 years of service as an usher. Elvin began ushering in 1960 shortly after returning to Northfield. His wife Corrine has also retired from service as an usher. We thank Elvin and Corrine for their commitment to our congregation!

## Scholarship Available for Holy Land Trip

Any Northfield resident that is interested in visiting the Holy Land in a month-long educational experience in 2015 may apply for a scholarship given by Northfielders for Justice in Israel/Palestine (NJP). Two years ago NJP gave its first scholarship and the recipients returned with praise for the program. If you are interested, contact Ruth Hansen (645-8238 [tulla\\_ruth@msn.com](mailto:tulla_ruth@msn.com)) or Jenny Hartley (645-6877 [jdhartley1@aol.com](mailto:jdhartley1@aol.com)).



## 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, January 7**  
Baked Potato Bar

**Wednesday, January 14**  
Turkey and Mashed Potatoes

**Wednesday, January 21**  
Taco Bar

**Wednesday, January 28**  
Tator Tot Hotdish

Free will offering appreciated!

**Come, Share a Meal!**



# 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* 581-1508  
*Sara Redetzke* 301-3599

## 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

## 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

## Quilters-Women of the ELCA Quilters

Contact: *Kathy Vang* 645-4849

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

Contact: *Kathy Mellstrom* 663-1451

## God's Love...Steady as the Stars

*By Barbara Eaves*

When our children were young, sometimes my husband would spread blankets on the driveway and have us lie down to look at the stars, locating the North Star, and the various constellations. When I was a young girl, I remember reciting this little ditty: star light, star bright, first star I see tonight. I wish I may, I wish I might have the wish I wish tonight. Mariners of old used the stars to guide them as they navigated the wide ocean spaces; today satellites do the guiding, yet the stars remain as a reliable backup if instruments fail.

In Genesis, when God wanted Abraham to understand the number of descendants he would have, he was directed to, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them...So shall your descendants be." References to stars are found throughout the scriptures. Numbers declares, "a star shall come out of Jacob;" in Matthew it was a star that guided men of wisdom to Jesus and 2 Peter and Revelation refer to Jesus as the "Morning Star."

What is it about the stars that captures the imagination and offers direction? Certainly awe and wonderment come to mind as we consider the words in Psalm 8, "...When I look at your heavens...the moon and the stars that you have established, what are human beings that you are mindful of them?"

Beyond their ability to amaze and be a point of reference, the stars provide a dependable constant. When we are faced with life-altering events or simply try to deal with the rapid rate of change in our world, there is a certain comfort to walking outside on a dark night, looking to the heavens, and seeing that the stars and the constellations are still in their places, as steady and reliable as they were ages and ages ago.

As it is with the stars so it is with God's love...steady and reliable, the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. We can count on it. Praise God!

*Bright and glorious is the sky,  
radiant are the heavens high  
where the golden stars are shining.  
All their rays to earth inclining  
beckon us to heav'n above, beckon us to heav'n above.  
ELW 303, verse 1*

*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.k12.mn.us](mailto:deborah.seitz@nfl.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)

### 2015 Lenten Book Read

This year participants in the Lenten book read will be able to choose from two books: *Take This Bread* by Sara Miles or *Daily Bread, Holy Meal* by Samuel Torvend. Descriptions of the books and copies for browsing will be available in the Commons in mid-January. Following sign-ups, January 18-Feb 1, small groups will be formed to meet either on Sunday mornings or Wednesday afternoons or evenings. Groups will meet for an hour a week for four weeks discussion.



## 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" is  
Transforming Life and Faith" by Carol Schersten LaHurd  
January's Topic: Repent and Forgive

### January

**Jan. 5: Bible Study Leaders** meet at 12:00 noon in the Fireside Room.

**Jan. 6 and 20: Knitters** meet at 9:00 a.m. at the home of Kathy Vang 507-645-4849.

**Jan. 7, 8, 10, 15, and 16: Circles/groups** meet. *See time and location below.*

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

**Jan. 12: WELCA Board** meeting at 9:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room.

### January Luncheon at St. Olaf King's Room

Women of the ELCA will meet on **Thursday, January 8 at 11:30 a.m.** for lunch in the King's Room at St. Olaf. "Christmas Carols, Old and New," led by Carol Benson, Donna Paulsen, Jenny Pelletier, Angela Schwichtenberg, and Nancy Ordahl Kmoch. Full buffet is \$14.00 and soup/salad/dessert is \$10.00. Beverage, tax, and tip are included in the price. 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. Please park at the church and we will pool rides. This will make it easier for parking at St. Olaf and will make the walk shorter for those not driving.

### Fair Trade Coffee and Chocolate Sales to Continue

Dawn Tommerdahl is managing the fair trade coffee and chocolate sales. Sales will be held on the first and second Sundays of every month. Anyone who wants or needs any items we sell in between times can contact Dawn at 507-301-3265 or dawn.tommerdahl@gmail.com.

### January Circle/Group Meetings:

#### Gather Groups

- Wednesday, Jan. 7:** **Lydia** 9:30 at Jo Dahlin's 1114 Heywood Rd. 645-5978  
**Sarah** 9:30 at Solveig Beckmen's 888 Cannon Valley Dr. #313 664-3882
- Thursday, Jan. 8:** **Elizabeth** No meeting scheduled in January  
**Martha/Claudia** 9:30 Parkview W. Contact: Marilyn Jacobson 663-9060
- Thursday, Jan. 15:** **Abigail/Rebecca** 2:00 at NRC Parkview E. Contact: Lois Wrede 663-9002
- Friday, Jan. 16:** **Mary** 1:00 at Genevieve Quarberg's 1604 Cannon Valley Dr. 645-0089
- Saturday, Jan. 10:** **Women's Breakfast Group** 8:30 Fireside Room Contact: Kathy Melstrom 663-1451

### Bold Café Group

#### Sunday, January 18, 9:45 a.m. Fireside Room

Watch bulletin for date. Contact: Christy Hall-Holt, [christy.hallholt@gmail.com](mailto:christy.hallholt@gmail.com), 581-1508 or  
Sara Redetzke, [srednorth@charter.net](mailto:srednorth@charter.net), 301-3599

For topics and articles, go to Boldcafe e-zine at [www.boldcafe.org](http://www.boldcafe.org).

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 the Peace and Justice group...

## ***2015 JUSTICE CALENDAR***

*January 5, 7:00 p.m.*      *Peace & Justice Group Meeting: "Issues of Violence - A Discussion", Fireside Room*  
*January 16, 7:00 p.m.*      *"Arts for Martin", Arcadia Charter School*  
*January 19, 7:00 p.m.*      *"Martin Luther King - Valuing All Families",*  
*Northfield Human Rights Commission Community Celebration*  
*January 26, 9:50 a.m.*      *St. John's Forum: "MN Joint Religious Legislative Coalition - Recent Impact",*  
*presented by Jennifer Nelson*  
*March 10, 8:30 a.m.*      *JRLC Day on the Hill - "Dignity in Democracy"*  
*(Register: facebook.com/jrlcmn, twitter.com, jrlcmn or www.jrlcmn.com)*

## **Issues of Violence**

Headlines, news stories, tv actions, plus films and other entertainments scream 'VIOLENCE' at us until we are often numbed by the painful and shocking situations. Our responses and empathy can be frozen by it all. How can we deal with it?

We will begin a conversation about the issues involved at the Peace and Justice Group meeting on Monday, January 5 at 7:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room. Come to hear what concerns others and to add your experiences and ideas.

From the leadership of Martin Luther King Junior and the studies underlying the ELCA Gender-based Violence statement we may find a way into some important issues and possible actions.

You may learn more about the ELCA work on Gender-based Violence at <http://www.elca.org/en/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Current-Social-Writing-Projects/Gener-Violence>. And more about Martin Luther King Jr. online.

### **"Arts for Martin" Eleventh Celebration**

Friday, January 16, 7:00 p.m.

Arcadia Charter School

***"Refugee Community"***

Presenter - Judy Dirks

From her work with the Northfield Coalition for Refugees in the 60s to her classes in citizenship now, she carries on the legacy of ML King, Jr. She has received the Northfield Human Rights Award.

All are welcome!

### ***"Valuing All Families"* MLK Community Celebration**

Monday, January 19, 2015, 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Greenvale Park Community School

***"Impact of Immigration on Families"***

Speaker: Sam Ouk, Cambodian Immigrant

Performing Groups: Aztec Dancers,  
Northfield Youth Choir, Latino Players

A Human Rights Award will be given  
with a response from the recipient.

Open Microphone

Birthday Cake

All are welcome!



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

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### From the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (JRLC) Annual Report

*The 2014 session of the Minnesota Legislature was one of the most productive and most dramatic in JRLC history. Two key initiatives of JRLC's Family Economic Security agenda were passed into law: a healthy increase in the state's minimum wage, and an increase in the Working Family Credit and other targeted tax credits. Our interfaith coalition was one of three main sectors, along with non-profits and organized labor, that fueled the multi-year effort to gain the minimum wage increase. JRLC also led a strong effort to reform predatory payday lending.*

*JRLC also played a key role in securing over \$100 million in bonding authority for affordable housing and also helped secure \$1 million in bonding for human trafficking victim services.*

**N.B. Jennifer Nelson, Statewide Organizer for JRLC, will speak about JRLC, its 2015 legislative agenda and will take questions at the St. John's Forum on Sunday, January 25.**

### Evaluation of the Rice County Jail Library

Peace and Justice completed an evaluation of the Rice County Jail Library in November. We found that the jail library was seriously deficient in most subject areas. We found few if any texts in the following areas: biography, history or the sciences. The jail library does have 8 bibles but few religious or spiritual texts. It has some books of fiction: 9 science fiction, 4 military sci fi, 3 super hero fiction, 2 fantasy, 9 historical fiction, 9 military fiction, one juvenile fiction, and 16 mysteries. Its collection of ethnic materials is limited to three (one on an African American, one on a Native American and one regarding a Russian). There are only three small books in Spanish and believe it or not a German dictionary.

Keep in mind that we are talking about the county jail not the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Faribault which is the prison. Imprisonment can last from one year and a day to life, but incarceration in the county jail can last anywhere from a day or two to eight months. Jail is not like prison. It is far harder because there is so little to do. We believe that St. John's church can make a genuine contribution to the lives of those incarcerated or those who will be incarcerated in the future. We are in great need of Spanish language texts, African American stories, books by African American writers and some good literature. The jail administrator told us that they also need books about parenting and puzzles and games. These books need to be softbound for security reasons. Any book or puzzle donated can be placed in the box near the entrance to St. John's Hall. Peace and Justice appreciates your consideration of this request.

## From Bread For the World

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Throughout 2014, Bread has successfully been lobbying in Washington and in local districts on several food-aid reform initiatives and there have been significant gains in Congress. Among the gains is the farm bill authorizing \$80 million for purchases of food closer to the place of need and greater flexibility to use cash during emergencies. Another success is the introduction of the bipartisan Food for Peace Reform Act introduced in the Senate. Bread's goal remains to get the U.S. government to make hunger and poverty a priority by 2017 – a key step toward ending hunger in our country and worldwide by 2030. (More information at [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org).)

**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*  
**Shared Ministry**  
*Christy Hall-Holt*  
**Parish Nurse**  
*Lynette Marks*  
**Youth Ministry**  
*Mike Skunes*  
**Congregation**  
**President**  
*Nathan Knutson*



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St. John's Annual Meeting  
will be held on  
**Sunday, January 25**  
*(following a potluck lunch)*