

THE VOICE

OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
Extending God's Love

December 2015

Volume 55, Number 12

*on the
inside . .*

Reconciling in
Christ Listening
Post
✧ p. 10

Stephen Ministry:
Assertiveness
Training
✧ p. 11

A Message from
Our Treasurer
✧ p. 14



Worship Services:
8:30 a.m. & 10:45 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.



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

Advent Fair

Wednesday, December 2, from 5:15 - 7:15 p.m.
(see page 9 for additional information)

Advent Vespers

Wednesdays, December 9 and 16, at 6:30 p.m.
Contemplative Worship in the Sanctuary

Sunday, December 13

Worship at 8:30 a.m.

Sunday School Christmas Program during Worship at 10:45 a.m.
(see page 9 for additional information)

Sunday, December 20

Music from Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*
at 8:30 and 10:45 a.m. Worship Services
(see page 5 for additional information)

Intergenerational Event: Christmas Dinner Workshop - Between Services
(see page 6 for additional information)

Christmas Eve

Thursday, 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

Friday, December 25

Festive Christmas Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.
Christmas Dinner for All from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 27

One Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.
Christmas Hymn Sing with John Ferguson

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.

From our pastors ...

*"How
silently,
how silently,
the wondrous
gift is giv'n.
So God
imparts to
human
hearts the
wonders of
his heaven.
No ear may
hear his
coming, but
in this world
of sin, where
meek souls
will receive
him, the dear
Christ
enters in".*

Hidden Gifts

It's that time of year when a bit of secrecy is acceptable. Loved ones purchase gifts for each other and squirrel them away in unexpected spots — especially if they have children — and wait for the delight of surprising each other on Christmas. How many people have memories of trying to guess where Mom hid the presents this year?

It's also budgeting time at St. John's — a task that might not be nearly as fun as buying presents, but I've come to appreciate how knowing a budget well means I know about all kinds of "invisible gifts." At St. John's you can easily turn to the Benevolence page and see what we give regularly to our Southeastern Minnesota Synod, to our partner congregations globally, and to local efforts like the Community Action Center. But that single line tells only part of the story.

- Every year, St. John's members give generously in "pass through" offerings to Lutheran World Relief, ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, and Minnesota Food Share. These gifts always number in tens of thousands.
- Our Sunday School collects its own offerings, supporting a child in Colombia and local efforts like Habitat for Humanity.
- The Women of the ELCA (including all Women of St. John's) is a source of tremendous generosity, giving to international and local efforts every single month, as well as funding quilts and knitted materials.
- Together, Sunday School children and the Women of St. John's are collecting gifts in-kind for such things as birthday bags for the CAC.
- Our operating budget supports heat, light and maintenance not only for our own programs, but also provides facilities for Open Door Preschool, Growing Up Healthy, many scout troops and lots of other community organizations. Most of these organizations pay little to nothing to use our building.
- At no charge to families, our afterschool program provides bus transportation, a healthy snack, and activities for kids, regardless of their church membership.
- Even our Personnel expenses have hidden gifts. Did you know that by participating in the ELCA's benefits plan, a part of our expenses every month go to support retired pastors in need and congregations who can barely afford one pastor?

And who can tell what the worth is of the many, many volunteer hours given every day here at St. John's. Your generosity of time provides meals every Wednesday to anyone who comes, provides all the labor for serving funeral lunches to grieving families.

Most of these gifts do not come with a label "community service" or "benevolence" on them. Yet they are indeed gifts of love, witnesses to the One who came into our midst silently 2015 years ago, who lived as one of us and depended on the life of others. THANK YOU for your witness to the ultimate Gift-giver this year of our Lord 2015. Merry Christmas.

From our pastors (cont.) ...

An Update to the Reconciling in Christ Conversation

In the August edition of *The Voice*, we wrote an article about the conversations we would be having this fall about the possibility of becoming a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation. As a reminder, an RIC congregation is one that creates an intentional welcome statement, reaching out to those who often feel alienated from the church. Creating a welcome statement is the first step in becoming Reconciling in Christ, and it specifically includes people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community.

Since then, we have had two adult forums on this topic, alongside significant conversations with the church council and members of the church boards. We also made available comment and question cards, that many of you turned in, and were shared with the church council. The response has been an overwhelming sense of gratitude that we are having these conversations around welcome and sexuality. In no way are we all in agreement regarding these very difficult and very personal conversations, but so far the conversations have been very respectful and open to all opinions. Some of us want to go ahead and become an RIC congregation as soon as possible, and some of us want to slow down to take some more time. Almost all of us have expressed interest in more opportunities for conversation and learning, so that we can approach this decision with our faith in Christ and our love for Scripture at the center.

In light of all of this, the RIC committee feels that it is important to take more time to engage in these conversations around welcome and sexuality before making any formal decision to become an RIC congregation. We, too, feel good about going slow and taking more time for mutual dialogue and listening. The hope is that St. John's will spend 2016 engaging deeply in the topic of God's Welcome and human sexuality.

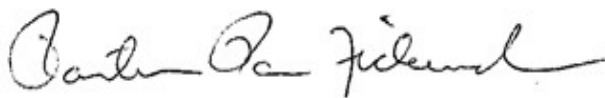
What does that look like? While nothing is set in stone, it might look something like the following:

- Intentional 1-on-1 conversations between RIC committee and members of the congregation
- Book study on God's Welcome
- Book, Bible studies, and adult forum on the following topics:
 - How we read and interpret Scripture
 - What the Bible says about homosexuality and why faithful Christians disagree about what they mean
 - How to engage in respectful dialogue with those with whom we disagree
- Listening Posts for people to voice their questions/concerns regarding this RIC process

Depending on how this dialogue goes, the council may discern that St. John's is ready to create a welcome statement, with input from both the council and the congregation. That welcome statement and the decision to become an RIC congregation would then go to the 2017 annual meeting. It is also possible that the council may discern that St. John's is not in a place to make such a welcome statement. We will have to wait and see.

Wherever this leads us, we will not all agree yet it is Christ who makes us one. As your pastors, we hope that all will feel welcomed into this conversation. We pray that this time of intentional conversation can be one that builds up and unites us as the body of Christ, rather than tears down and divides us.

As always, please do not hesitate to speak with either of us, if you have questions or concerns.



Pam Fickenscher



Jonathan Davis

Important Dates to Remember!

Sunday School Schedule

Dec. 6	Sunday School – Program Rehearsal
Dec. 13	Sunday School – Christmas Program at the 10:45 a.m. Worship Service
Dec. 20	Intergenerational Sunday School Event in St. John's Hall, see page 6
Dec. 27	No Sunday School – <i>Christmas Break</i>
Jan. 3	No Sunday School – <i>Christmas Break</i>

Sunday School Christmas Program Rehearsal for 5th Graders

Wednesday, December 9
5:30 – 6:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Sunday School Christmas Program

Sunday, December 13, 10:45 a.m.
Pre-service music starts at 10:30 a.m.

Christmas Break

No Wednesday programming on December 23 & December 30
No Sunday School on December 27 & January 3

4th and 5th Grade CATEchism resumes in January

Let's Go Bowling!

Monday, January 18, is a NO SCHOOL DAY so we're heading to the bowling alley!

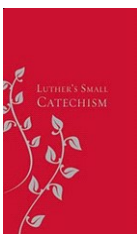
Who: Grades 2-5, Friends are always welcome!

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!



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

CAT classes meet downstairs, 4th grade in Room 19 and 5th grade in the Undercroft, from 4:15 – 4:45 p.m. Let me know if your child would like to ride the Wednesday afterschool bus to CAT!

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 13. We welcome solos or ensembles, short instrumental or vocal pieces. The prelude begins at 10:30 a.m. before the 10:45 a.m. Sunday school program. Please sign-up in the Commons or give Julie Brehmer a call at 645-4429 or email Frances Boehning at francesboehning@yahoo.com if you are interested in participating.

Nursery Thank You!

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers who offer their time on Sunday mornings to care for children in the Nursery during worship services! Special thank to Amy McBroom for preparing the schedule of volunteers and to our St Olaf student, Erica Johnson. It is truly appreciated!



Music and Worship Life at St. John's

Friends,

Happy Advent! Advent is by far my favorite season in the liturgical calendar. Aside from wonderful music, there is something so amazing to me about this gradual movement towards Christmas, beginning with a powerful world-changing prophecy and ending with Christ born as a helpless infant in Bethlehem. Who would have thought that years of longing for change would be answered by a birth? The story is so mysterious and wondrous!

One of the beautiful ways we will mark the season of Advent at St. John's is by worshiping together. There will be times for us to gather in solemnity and light candles in the darkness, other times when the voices of children retell the Christmas story, and still other times when music and the voices of our choirs will share how artists and poets have sought to understand this season. I invite you to experience it all.

A few worship services of note:

Advent Vespers

On December 9th and 16th we gather at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary for contemplative services of scripture, poetry, and music. We also light candles in the darkness as we pray for the world.

Sunday, December 20

On this morning we hear a special collaboration of Jubilate Schola, Laudate Choir from St. John's, Anima of the Northfield Youth Choirs, and members of Bethel's youth choir, together with harp, as they share Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*.

Christmas Eve – 3:30 p.m. (especially for children and families)

Families with young children, and anyone who wants to experience the joyful chatter of children eager to celebrate Christmas, are invited to worship together. The service will be filled with familiar carols, music by our children's choirs, and a special "candle" lighting.

Christmas Eve – 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Vespers service with candle light.

Christmas Eve – 11:00 p.m.

We gather together to herald the start of Christmas morning. We celebrate Holy Communion, sing beloved Christmas carols, and hear music by our Laudate Choir and choir alumni.

As a longstanding tradition at St. John's, we welcome all Laudate choir alumni, friends, and family to serve as the choir for the 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. We will rehearse at 10:00 p.m. in the choir room.

Peace to you in this busy Advent season, and I look forward to the moments where we can be still and worship together.

Nathan



New Snow Removal Ministry!

Like shoveling? Operating big power tools? Contact Tim Byers at 645-4429 to sign up to be on an on call list of snow clearing service providers!

Nametag Sundays!

We will be renewing our commitment to Nametag Sundays to help us get to know each other better. Submit ideas for "Conversation Starters for Shy Lutherans" to Christy Hall-Holt at sharedministry@stjohnsnorthfield.org. We'll use a conversation starter for each of these Sundays and write them on our nametags.

NEW! St. John's Wednesday Evening Meals Need YOU!

Meals served from 5:15-6:15 p.m.

On the Menu in December: Pulled Pork Sandwiches/Hot Dogs (Dec. 2), Chilli (Dec. 9), and Scalloped Potatoes with Ham (Dec. 16)

Thank you so much to all of you who have served to put on our Wednesday meal! If you haven't yet had a chance, come and join the fun of serving together -- even 15 minutes can help a lot!

Every Wednesday we need people to sign up for the following:

- Person to pray/sing a prayer when a quorum is gathered (between 5:30 & 5:45 p.m.)
- Person to introduce an ice-breaker/mixer, a way to get people mingling from table to table
- Beverage Set-Up (4:15 - 5:15) - 1 person
- Dishwashing & Bussing tables (5:30 - 6:30) - 4 people
- Sweeping Kitchen & Serving Area (6:00) - 1 person
- Wiping Down Surfaces/Kitchen Tidy (5:45 - 6:15) - 1 person
- Bring a Dessert (e.g. 2 doz cookies, pan of bars, etc.) - 8 people

Sign up to help out with Wednesday Night Meals in the Commons or online by clicking on this link: https://stjohnsnorthfield.ccbchurch.com/group_detail.php?group_id=109

Or Call or email Christy Hall-Holt at 645-4429 or sharedministry@stjohnsnorthfield.org

SERVING TO LOVE



LOVING TO SERVE

Mark your calendars for an Intergenerational Event Sunday, December 20, 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.



St. John's Not-So-New-But-Even-More-Helpful Online Directory and Information System: Church Community Builder (CCB)

In the Spring of 2015, St. John's introduced two new initiatives: Church Community Builder (CCB) and Monthly Hospitality Groups. They both have helped the other to really take hold at St. John's! December marks the 9th and final month of the first round of hospitality groups, and the online directory has been an integral part of getting going!

Here's the Welcome you receive when you log into your home page on CCB:

Welcome to St. John's new online community!

Church Community Builder or "CCB" is designed to be not only a current, up-to-date directory but to also allow members and visitors to communicate with church staff and other members, express interest in service opportunities, to sign up for volunteer opportunities, download giving statements, plus much more!

Blessings,

From the Staff of St. John's Lutheran Church

If you use the internet, and you haven't yet had a chance to log in to CCB, do it! You'll have a wealth of information and resources to strengthen your connection to St. John's community. CCB is easy to find -- all you do is go to St. John's website, and at the top right you'll see the words "Online Directory (CCB)." Put your mouse over these words and click to be taken to the CCB Log In page. In order to get your username and password sent to your email address, click on the words "Sign In" that are found in the middle and to the left of the Login Page. You may also call the Church Office and ask for Christy or Leah to request this information.

What can I do on CCB?

Look up telephone numbers, email addresses, and home addresses of members.

Communicate with church staff and other members using CCB's messaging.

Find out what groups you are part of and sign up to be in groups.

Sign-up for volunteer opportunities.

Download giving statements.

Look up instructions for being a greeter, or serving coffee or communion.

Sign-Up Instructions for CCB

- Once you log in, look for a blue square/bar at the top left of the screen, next to the words "St. John's Lutheran Church." It has three white horizontal lines on it. (If it doesn't already say "Menu" on it, you may click on it once and it should expand to say "Menu.")
- Under the blue bar that says "Menu" click on the bar that says "Home" (or just has an icon of a house.)
- At the far right of that screen, under your name, there is a heading that says "My Groups."
- Look in the list below the "My Groups" heading and locate the name of the group or event for which you want to sign up. Click on this name.
- You should then see the name of the group or event in fairly big letters towards the top of the screen.
- Under this you will see a menu bar on which one of the items is titled "Needs" -- click on this.
- At the left side of this screen under the title "Current Needs", you will see blue headings listed that show each of the need groupings.
- Please click on one of the needs that interests you.
- To sign up for one of the needs, look at the fourth/last column to the right titled "I'll take it."
- Click on the check box that corresponds to the item for which you would like to sign up.
- Once you do that, it will list your name under the "Taken by" column. Note: An email will be sent immediately to the coordinator to inform them you are able to serve in this role. If you find you are unable to serve, click the box again to uncheck.

Mission Outreach

The Christmas Sharing Tree Through December 4

The annual "Christmas Sharing Tree" program sponsored by the Northfield Community Action Center will be set up in the Commons until December 4. The Christmas Sharing 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 4. In addition, we will also offer gifts to our Companion Synods in Columbia and Tanzania. The tree will be decorated with 50 envelopes for making donations to Lutheran Schools in these Synods. Thank you in advance for your donations!

Christmas Dinner Needs Your Help

St. John's will again host the Community Christmas Dinner as our gift to the community in celebration of the birth of Jesus. The organizing group is developing the planning required for a successful gift. Most important is the recruiting of your contribution to this gift.

Beginning on **Sunday, November 29, between worship services** there will be a table for you to record your contribution to this Christmas Dinner gift. As in past years the project requires many workers and contributions of food. We will be asking you **to volunteer for one of a number of 1.5 to 2 hour tasks on Christmas Day and/or to provide a salad, desert or potato hot dish.** It should be noted that our new Associate Pastor has volunteered to scrub cooking dishes after the Christmas day service and last year our "new" Senior Pastor did the same. We are blessed by committed leadership!



From our past experience we know how many workers are needed for various tasks at the different times. So all volunteers will make a very important contribution and not just be there – given that volunteers are away from family for a short time. We also have a good idea of the number of people who come to this dinner and thus the amount of various food dishes that are required. Based on increases in attendance in past years some of the food contributions have been increased. Our experience is that there has been very little food remaining after the feast. We are not like Jesus who could have large quantities of food left over after feeding the crowds!!!

So why do we do this and who will come? The first part of the question is obvious from our commitment to Christ. Who will come? The community comes!! In the past there are people who would not have a great meal because of economic issues. People come who would otherwise be alone. People from St. John's and the community come because they want to be part of the celebration. A favorite story concerns a mother who resides at the Northfield Retirement Community who invited her children and grandchildren for dinner and came to St. John's for the celebration. A daughter told us that this was likely mom's last Christmas and she celebrated in hosting the family dinner once more!

So we invite you to participate in this celebration.

News and Events

Advent Fair! Wednesday, December 2

You are invited to St. John's Advent Fair on Wednesday, December 2, 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!

Schedule: 5:15 - 6:15 p.m. - Wednesday Meal: Pulled Pork Sandwiches and Hot Dogs
5:45 - 7:00 p.m. - Fair Trade Fair in the Commons

The Fair Trade Fair sells handcrafted items made by global artisans abroad. Plus, create Christmas crafts, enjoy "hot off the griddle" leftse and live music.

Contact Julie Brehmer if you have questions at children@stjohnsnorthfield.org.



St. John's Children's Christmas Program Sunday, December 13 at the 10:45 a.m. Worship Service



This year, St. John's Sunday School classes will be participating in our 10:45 a.m. worship service, Sunday, December 13 in St. John's Sanctuary.

Pre-service music by children in K – grade 5 begins at 10:30 a.m. Please sign-up in the Commons or give Julie Brehmer a call at 645-4429 or email Frances Boehning at francesboehning@yahoo.com if you are interested in participating.

If your child is unable to participate please notify his/her teacher or call Julie Brehmer at 645-4429.

Poinsettia Orders

The Chancel Guild will be taking orders for poinsettias between services on Sunday, December 6, and Sunday, December 13. 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 16. The flowers will be used to decorate the church for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.



Learning and Fellowship

Sunday Learning and Fellowship in December

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

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

December 6:

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

Fair Trade Sales of Coffee/Tea/Hot Chocolate Mix/Chocolate Bars, Commons.

Sunday School (Pre-K thru Grade 5), Sanctuary.

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

St. John's Forum, St. John's Hall.

December 13:

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

Fair Trade Sales of Coffee/Tea/Hot Chocolate Mix/Chocolate Bars, Commons.

Sunday School (Pre-K thru Grade 5), Sanctuary.

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

Toddler Time, Room 20.

December 20:

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

Intergenerational Event: Christmas Dinner Workshop, St. John's Hall.

December 27:

Coffee and Fellowship, 11:00 a.m., St. John's Hall.

Carol Sing with John Ferguson

(NOTE - Only one worship service this day).

Reconciling in Christ Listening Post Thursday, December 3rd 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Do you have questions or concerns about the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) conversation that we have been having at St. John's? Recently, St. John's has having conversations about the possibility of becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation, which means creating a welcome statement that intentionally welcomes those of all sexual orientations and genders. The RIC committee, along with your pastors, want this to be an open dialogue, where all voices are valued, respected, and heard. If you would like to ask a question, express a concern, or simply have more conversation about this topic, you are invited to this RIC Listening Post on Thursday, December 3rd, from 7:00-8:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room. Pastor Pam and a member of the RIC committee will be present to both listen and lead the discussion.

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

Assertiveness - The Power of Speaking Truth in Love

On Tuesday, December 1 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Fireside Room, Pastor Davis will be offering a session on Assertiveness Training. All are welcome to attend. This session draws on Stephen Minister training materials, including Speaking the Truth in Love by Kenneth Haugk, founder of Stephen Ministry. He defines assertive behavior as "behavior that honors the self while honoring others. The assertive person authentically cares for others and at the same time engages in God-pleasing self-care."

Haugk goes on to say, "Assertive behavior is a constructive way of living and relating to people. It is behavior that reflects concern about being honest, direct, open, and natural in relations with others." Since this is the time of year when there may be challenging interactions with family and friends, the St. John's Stephen Ministers are offering this opportunity to learn more about assertiveness.

During this holiday season, if you or someone you know would benefit from talking with a Stephen Minister, please contact one of the pastors or Joan Halvorson at 645-8445.



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."

Bernard "Benny" Blanness
December 11, 2014

Steve Edwins
December 14, 2014

Dorothy Langeness
December 18, 2014

Ivan Plaggemeyer
December 20, 2014

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

Matthew 5:4

Grief Support Ministry

Northfield Grief Support Coalition:

A grief support group for anyone grieving the death of a loved will begin on January 4 from 3:00-4:00 p.m. at the Northfield Retirement Community. Further information is available by contacting Pastor Kristine Braaten-Lee at 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.

Grief Booklets: "Journeying through Grief" is a resource for those grieving the loss of loved ones. Contact one of the pastors if you would like a copy or if you would like to give a copy to a friend or family member.

November Actions

Radio Broadcasts

November 1, 2015, given by Chuck Muckey in memory of his wife Eileen Muckey and daughters Debra Nuggent and Carla Muckey.

November 8, 2015, given in memory of Margery Otterness by the Otterness Children.

November 15, 2015, given in memory of Sharon Kipp by Bill and Mary Gasho.

November 22, 2015, given by Bob and Marilyn Matta in thanksgiving for God's many blessings.

November 29, 2015, given by Meryllyn Calcutt in memory of her daughter Lori.

Deaths

Burt Paulsen, October 19, 2015

Joan Olson, October 22, 2015

Dean Ostlie, November 11, 2015

Chester Hoversten, November 16, 2015

Welcome to St. John's! Accompany and New Members

We welcomed the following new members during the Rite of Welcome held on November 22nd! (If you would like contact information please contact the church office at office@stjohnsnorthfield.org or 645-4429 .

Henry Burt

Cindy Clauson

Shelley DeBernardi

Beret Froehle & Sam and Violet

Chuck and Lois Houge

Tim Keneipp and Ingrid Solverson-Keneipp

Kate Margolis

Andy Nelson

Stan Noterman

Bob and Sandra Nyvall

Eric Sponheim



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 2
Pulled Pork Sandwiches / Hot Dogs

Wednesday, December 9
Chili

Wednesday, December 16
Scallop Potatoes with Ham

Wednesday, Dec. 23 & 30
Christmas Break - No Meals

Free will offering appreciated!

From the Benevolence and Social Concerns Board:

God's Work, Our Hands

Where does the ministry of St. John's begin? How far does it extend? Is there a cut-off point, beyond which we don't have to care?

Of course, the starting point is right here in our own congregation and the town of Northfield. Here we gather to worship God, hear God's Word, and reach out to others in witness and service ministries.

One church observer says that "Ministry is incarnationally specific. There is no such thing as ministry in general." We are the church incarnate in Northfield. Our field of ministry is right around us.

But it goes farther than that. When Jesus first commissioned the disciples for their mission in Matthew 28, he said, "Go and make disciples of all nations." And in Mark 16 he said, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." Theologian Philip Jenkins asks, "If its not global, is it Christian?" So our calling to be the church draws us out beyond our local settling to embrace the whole world.

The ELCA is organized to help us participate in the full scope of ministry that Jesus envisions for us. Think of the church as a series of concentric circles, each expanding out from a center point.

The center point for us is St. John's Church. Our first obligation is to be a witness for Christ locally, and to serve the needs of people around us as we have opportunity. So we welcome people from our community into our church, participate in local programs and support causes locally, including among others Community Action Center, Health Finders, Rice County Habitat for Humanity, and The Northfield Retirement Community.

The next circle of organization is the Cannon River Conference, including the 41 ELCA congregations in our immediate area. Here we give support to our area churches and develop projects that impact our section of the church. Next we are part of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, which covers the corner of the state that has been called "The toe of the boot that is Minnesota." Through the synod we take part in church supportive ministries as well as reach out the meet area opportunities for collaborative ministries, such as Good Earth Village Church Camp at Spring Valley, and the Enough Food For All program.

Through the synod we are member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The ELCA spans the globe in mission and ministries in programs such as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, Lutheran World Relief, World Hunger Appeal, American and Global Mission programs, Lutheran College and University work, Seminary education, to name a few among many more.

At each of these levels we participate in ministry programs that reach out beyond our local setting into the world. Which of these levels of ministry is most important? They all are! Each form an essential part of the whole ministry to which we are called as a church. Thus our congregational budget will show support of ministries that fall under each of these church expressions — our local congregation, the Cannon River Conference, The Southeastern Minnesota Synod, and the national and international global ministries of the

Our task is the keep them in balance with each other, honoring them all, neglecting none.

From the Faith and Health Board

We are seeking nurses interested in helping with blood pressure screening between services on Sunday and during Wednesday evening meals. Interested in offering your time to St. John's in this manner, please e-mail Lynette Marks at lynemarks@deskmedia.com.



A Message from Our Congregation Treasurer

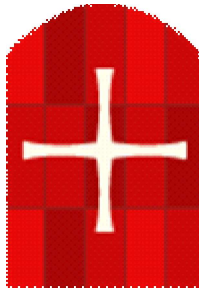
Hello! A message from your St John's Treasurer! When writing last June I noted that contributions were both ahead of budget and expenditures. Now that we are in November we note that contributions through October are both below budget and below expenditures

St John's is becoming stronger in many ways with a very capable and dedicated staff and members contributing to many important projects. We are growing and bringing God's message of good works to our community. That work needs to continue and grow. But of course an important part of that growth is derived from the monetary contributions of all members. So we encourage your financial contributions to this important need!

Best,

Bill Carlson, Treasurer

From the Stewardship Board



For those of you who have not yet responded, please complete your pledge card and either drop it off at the church office or place it in the Sunday offering plate. If you have misplaced the pledge card, please call the church office and a pledge card will be sent to you. Thanks for your cooperation in this important matter.

FROM BREAD FOR THE WORLD

God's grace in Jesus Christ moves us to help our neighbors, whether they live in the next house, the next state, or the next continent. Food is a basic need, and it is unjust that so many people must go without enough to eat. We can end hunger in our time. Everyone, including our government, must do their part. With the stroke of a pen, policies are made that redirect millions of dollars and affect millions of lives. By making our voices heard in Congress, we make our nation's laws fairer and more compassionate to people in need.



breadfortheworld
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

In the Offering of Letters in October St. John's members sent a total of 152 letters to our representative and senators urging renewal of child nutrition programs, including school meals, summer feeding and WIC (women and infant children). Go to bread.org for up to date information on Bread for the World's advocacy ministry and opportunities for further participation.



WOMEN OF ST. JOHN'S
Mission Statement:
TO MOBILIZE WOMEN TO ACT BOLDLY
Women of the ELCA includes ALL women of St. Johns!

December Meetings

- December 9:** *Lydia* - 10:00 a.m. at Anita Hellie's, 1129 Heritage Drive (301-3609)
Sarah - 9:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room (Contact Char Nelson, 663-0564)
- December 9 and 22:** *Knitters* meet at 10:00 a.m. at the home of Kathy Vang (507-645-4849)
- December 10:** *Martha/Claudia* - 9:30 a.m. at Parkview West (Contact Marilyn Jacobson, 663-9060)
Elizabeth - Noon potluck at Jo Kleber's, 616 Meldahl Ln. (645-8330)
Abigail/Rebecca - 2:00 p.m. at Parkview East
- December 11:** *Mary* - 1:00 p.m. at Jo Olson's, 516 Stonebridge Dr. (507-321-1091)
- December 12:** *Breakfast Group* - 8:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room (Contact Kathy Mellstrom, 663-1451)
- December 14 & 17:** *Quilters* meet at 8:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

Check Out the New Facebook Page

A Facebook page for Women of St. John's has been created. Look for more information about this Facebook page elsewhere in the Voice.

Carols Old and New

Join other women of St. John's Lutheran Church at 11:30 a.m. at the King's Room at St. Olaf College on Thursday, January 7, for a lunch and the singing of Christmas Carols led by Carol Benson. Sign up on the Women of St. John's bulletin board indicating whether you would like the full buffet or the soup/salad/dessert option. Please have your money or check payable to WELCA ready to give to treasurer Barb Walters who will pay the bill. Please sign up by Sunday, January 3.

Seeking Coordinator for Baby Care Kits

St. John's is in need of a new coordinator for the Baby Care Kits which are given away as needs arise both in our own country as well as overseas through Lutheran World Relief. Women of St. John's assemble these kits by knitting or sewing sweaters, gowns and sleepers, receiving blankets, etc. If assembling and working to complete these kits with the help of volunteers is of interest to you, please contact Anita Hellie, Women of St. John's president for more information.

Submit items for the **Voice** to Marilyn Calcutt (merylyn.calcutt@gmail.com)
Submit information for the **Sunday Bulletin** to Mary Hoff (jpmhof@msn.com)

Senior Pastor
Pam Fickenscher
Associate Pastor
Jonathan Davis
Visitation Pastor
John Quam
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 H. Garlie
Shared Ministry
Christy Hall-Holt
Parish Nurse
Lynette Marks
Youth Ministry
Mike Skunes
Congregation
President
Patsy Ophaug



500 Third Street West
Northfield, MN 55057
507-645-4429

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 36
Northfield, MN

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!

Mark your calendar for the annual meeting on Sunday, January 24.