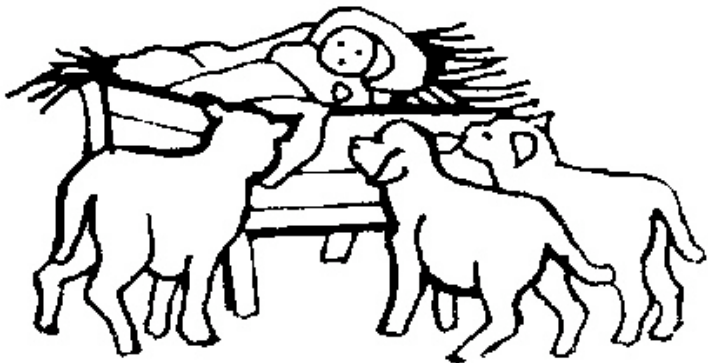


Visionotes



Luke 2:9-12

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

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8:00 am. to 1:00 pm. Mon.-Thurs.
Phone: (608) 882-4044

Address Service
Requested



COME, LET US WORSHIP THE LORD TOGETHER!

SATURDAYS @ 5:00 P.M.

SUNDAYS @ 9:00 A.M.

*WITH A VARIETY OF TRADITIONAL HYMNS AND
CONTEMPORARY SONGS, INSPIRING WORDS
AND HOLY ACTIONS*

*Education Hour After Worship
for Children and Adults*

10:15am - 11:15 am

ST. JOHN'S STAFF

Pastor	Matthew Pooock	352-0418
Parish Secretary	Deb Fredendall	882-4044
Financial Secretary	Shelly Andrew	882-4706
Visionotes Editor	Judy Bratzke	882-4876
Parish Custodians	Peck & Joan Sperry	882-5049
Sunday School Superintendent	Raquel Michel	882-4039

Office hours are 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday

MUSIC MINISTRY

Organists/Pianists:	
Amy Eager	882-4159
Melanie Greenleaf	751-8745
Sharon Magee	882-5189

ST. JOHN'S MINISTRY LEADERS

LWR Coordinator	Dee Jeans	882-5829
World Hunger Coordinator	Donna Johnson	882-4192
Care Closet Coordinator	Linda Gallagher	882-4233
Historian/Archivist	Kim Fiedler	490-0100
Librarian	Karen Anderson	882-5218
Sound Board	Jeff Herbers	882-5517
Altar Guild Chairperson	Diana Crans	882-6833
Altar Guild Chairperson	Deb Fredendall	882-6327
Wedding Ceremony Coordinator	Patty Mahoney	576-2623
Wedding Ceremony Coordinator	Christy Steindl	295-9744
Funeral Serving Coordinator	Vonnie Hatlen	882-4707

(Cont'd on Page 23)

ST. JOHN'S MINISTRY LEADERS (Cont'd)

Youth Ministry Leaders	Carl Korfmacher, Keith Hennig, Kathy Wells
Thrivent Coordinators	Suzi Soetaert, Joy Olson, Deb Fredendall
Media & Technology	Tammy Pomplun, Dan Drake, Steve Ver Kuilen

2011 CHURCH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD

President	Ken Reese	882-4150
Vice President	Steve Ver Kuilen	882-6775
Secretary	Eileen Meredith	882-5898
Treasurer	Julie Creek Hessler	882-2560

COUNCIL MEMBERS AND COMMITTEES

Fellowship	David Stadt	882-2560
Parish Educstion	Julie Creek Hessler	882-2560
Life and Growth	Steve Ver Kuilen	882-6775
Youth Ministry	Andy Lehman	882-6720
Stewardship	Kristian Finrock	347-7301
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Memorials	Eileen Meredith	882-5898
Mutual Ministry	Janice Schuh	882-6132
Buildings and Grounds	Bob Johnson	882-4418
Social Concerns	Ken Johnson	882-4192

COUNCIL MEETS the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm. (Revised 1/11)

Endowment Committee	Ken Fenrick, Linda Gallagher, Eric Peterson, David Paugel, Sylvia Schneeberger
Mutual Ministry Committee	Sue Herman, Gary Buss, Lynda Moseley, Steve Schneeberger

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

St. John's Lutheran Church is a community in Jesus Christ gathering: To reach up in worship, To reach out in evangelism, and To reach within for spiritual growth.

ST. JOHN'S VISIONOTES

Published monthly as a communication/coordination of the church calendar of events and for its members and friends. Editor: Judy Bratzke, who can be contacted by phone: 882-4876 or e-mail: jbratzke@charter.net. Articles may also be left at the church office.



***In Our Thoughts and Prayers
Those Who Are Ill***



St. John's Members

Jeff Hanson
Marion Farnsworth
Karen Anderson
Ron Carlsen
Al Hipke

Family and Friends

Neil Kuenzli
Claire Renz
Lori Mortensen
Randy Rinehart
Bennett Barelmann
Ester Brodsky Mutter
Drew Brandt

David Steifner

Julee Devlin
Gordon Whipple
Orlo Espeland
Pat Schmidt
Jim Jones
Pat Johnson
Larry Wickersham

Men and Women in Service

Curtis Langer, Chet Heacox, Jesse Rice, JJ Boley, Holdin Worley, Eric Carlson, John Garbrecht and Joe Hunt. Our prayers also to all servicemen and women who serve our country stateside.

Our Condolences to:

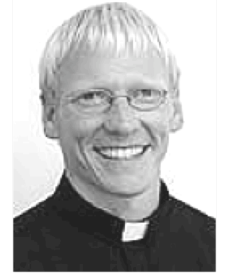
Joan Fisk and family as they grieve the death of her mother, Dorothy Tilley. The family of **Ray Kosmala** as they grieve his recent death. May the Holy Spirit enfold you in peace.

Our Congratulations to Those who Celebrated an Anniversary:

Maynard & Darlene Ruck on their 50th wedding anniversary, **Ross and Amy Martinson** on their 7th, **Duke & Marion Farnsworth** on their 41st, and **Jeff and Sue Farnsworth** on their 8th. May God bless and enrich your marriage in the years to come.

Rite of Baptism:

Tucker Putnam, son of Cody and Stacie Putnam and also the baptism of **Cody Putnam**; and **Kiley Rose Reinstad**, daughter of Jason and Amber Reinstad. We pray that they grow strong in their relationship with the Lord Jesus.



HALLELUJAH

The 21st century has given birth to a new cultural phenomenon: the flash mob. Perhaps you've seen a flash mob in person, or more likely you've watched one on the internet's youtube. (Ask your most technologically savvy friend to show you one.) A flash mob occurs when a group of people (a mob) plans and organizes a coordinated action or display that takes place suddenly (in a flash) in public places. Often the group will rehearse together in advance, and then use cell phones and social media to assemble and "perform" spontaneously. Very often the action begins with one participant and slowly grows to a large group as all participants join. The crowd is always taken by surprise, and usually pleasantly so. Entertainment, satire, artistic expression, and sheer fun are the mob's motivators.

Flash mobs reached a new height of popularity about one year ago. At the beginning of the holiday season, a 100-voice professional choir spread themselves throughout a shopping mall food court and sang the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's oratorio *Messiah*. The crowd was delighted, and the event was recorded and uploaded to the internet. Since that time the "Christmas Food Court Flash Mob" has been crowned as the most popular flash mob to date, with over 35 million views online.

Imagine sitting in the middle of a crowded food court, chowing down on pizza by the slice. You're in the middle of checking your shopping list when someone starts to sing...and to sing really well. And then another voice, and another. Louder and louder. "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Before you know it, bursting in to your shopping, eating, everyday world is a heavenly sound. "King of kings, and Lord of lords... and He shall reign forever and ever!"

Cont'd on Page 4

December Visionotes

During my four years at Luther College we sang this entire oratorio in early December as part of an annual tradition. The scripture-based text begins with the story of the coming of the Lord's chosen savior (the Messiah) and announces the birth of Christ. For this reason we often associate Handel's *Messiah* with the Christmas holiday. The text goes on to tell the story of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection, and ends by proclaiming God's promise of eternal life.

The proclamation of Christ and the celebration of God's reign could hardly be more appropriate for a *Messiah* flash mob. Right in the middle of the world, right where everyday people live out their lives, God was praised. That's literally what "hallelujah" means...praise the Lord. Too often our mouths are shut and our tongues tied when it comes to sharing the love of Jesus the Messiah. But this is a message of life that we have, it's a word that the world needs to hear. We don't need to be embarrassed or apologetic. Just as the food court crowd was utterly delighted, very often our friends and neighbors are more eager to hear about the love of Christ than we are to tell it. What we do "in the church" is for "out there" in the world.

The Christmas Food Court Flash Mob released God's word to the public, and we can follow suit. This holiday season is an ideal time to share the message of Christ with a world that can get very *wrapped up* in the trimmings of the season. Avoid some of the hassle and hustle. Be thoughtful with the recipients and scope of your giving. Consider your favorite charities; make a gift in someone's honor. Decorate with symbols of Christ and his nativity. Invite others to your home and to worship. When you do these things, share gently with others why you did. In these ways and many more, we give witness to the hope we have in Christ.

Flash mobs might only endure for a season, but Christ can't be contained in any season. Just as a baby emerges from the womb, Christ is bursting forth into the world – in us, and through us.

Hallelujah!



"The mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." –Isaiah 55:12

December Visionotes

NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING SPONSORSHIP/PARTNERSHIP

In July 2012, 11 youth and 2 adults will be joining another 39,000 youth at the ELCA National Youth Gathering. Each youth is responsible for approximately \$600 to participate in this life-changing experience. The whole St. John's community is invited to come alongside them and participate in this experience too! A sponsorship provides a youth with at least \$50 towards the cost AND a personal prayer partner. This is a one-on-one, personal connection between a St. John's member and a youth that will strengthen both people in faith and community. A partnership provides the entire group with a donation towards the cost and continued prayer for the group as they prepare. This is an invitation to join the youth as they discover more about God and what God's up to in the world. Contact the office or Becca Pook beccapook@gmail.com to join them either as a sponsor or partner as they prepare for New Orleans!



To My Dear Friends At St. John's

Mere words almost fail me to describe my feelings in response to your magnificent efforts to help me and Catharine through this past month while I've undergone hip surgery.

The prayers, cards, letters, visits, phone calls and e-mails have poured in to us throughout this time. Pastor Matt has visited me several times, as well as some of you other church members.

I have literally felt the power of directed prayer lift me up and keep me optimistic and blessed with a good recovery. And my recovery seems to be quite remarkable to the doctors, nurses and other aides, both at Riverview Clinic and Mercy Hospital in Janesville, who remark openly about my excellent progress whenever I go in for needed therapy and post-operative exams.

I truly feel blessed by all of this, and I humbly and joyfully credit Pastor Matt for leading the way with his wonderful all-encompassing methods and words as he has ministered to us.

We will never forget what all of your kind, combined efforts have done for Kate and me. Thank you.

May God continue to bless St. John's members and friends.

Dave & Kate Fellows

SWEET WEDNESDAY (9TH-12TH GRADE) HOLIDAY PARTY!

Every Wednesday starting at 7:30pm (until about 8:45pm, or so) our high school youth meet together for a good time of friends, fun, and faith. We start with dessert, have some good discussion, pray together, and then play games. It's a totally sweet time for High school youth ONLY – and friends are most welcome. On **Wednesday, December 21**, we'll have a holiday party together. Bring a white elephant gift (something you already own that could possibly be valuable to someone else) wrapped up to share. We'll celebrate Christmas with fun and gifts!

BELL RINGING WITH SALVATION ARMY

The season of good cheer is upon us, which means lots of food, shopping, and celebration. This is also an important time of the year to remember “the least of these” and to serve and give to those in need. FOR YEARS a favorite activity of our St. John's youth has been to ring bells for the Salvation Army. When discussing their favorite events of the year, many of them talk about the fun and importance of this activity.

Beginning last year, AWARE in Evansville has organized bell ringing right here in town. This adds an element of convenience, and it keeps dollars in our community. **High school youth are scheduled to ring bells at the Piggly Wiggly on Sunday, December 4, from noon to 2:00pm. Come join in!**

Other available times for bell ringing through AWARE (as of publication):

Thursdays, 4-8pm, at the Pig, Dec 1, 8, 15, 22

Fridays, 4-8pm, at the Pig, Dec 9, 16, 23

Saturdays, 8am-2pm, at the Pig, Dec 3, 17, 24

Saturdays, 8am-2pm, at the Pharmacy, Dec 3, 17, 24

Sundays, 10am-2pm, at the Pig, Dec 4, 11, 18

Consider when you might commit yourself to a two hour time slot of bell ringing. Just let Pastor Matt know in order to reserve your slot and spread the word. Chances are, a group of youth will join you.

LIFE TOGETHER

ADVENT WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

- Saturdays at 5pm, and Sundays at 9am – Anticipate the Advent (coming) of Christ
- Wednesday, November 30, 7:00pm – **Midweek Advent Worship 1**
- Sunday, December 4, 7:30pm – **Ecumenical Christmas Concert**, at St. Paul Catholic Church
- Wednesday, December 7, 7:00pm – **Midweek Advent Worship 2**
- Sunday, December 11, 7:00pm – **Service of Remembrance**, at St. Paul Catholic Church
- Wednesday, December 14, 7:00pm – **Midweek Advent Worship 3**
- Sunday, December 18, 4:00pm – **Children's Christmas Program**
- Wednesday, December 21, 7:00pm – **Midweek Advent Worship 4, with Prayer for Healing**

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP AT ST. JOHN'S

- Saturday, December 24 – **Christmas Eve worship, at 3:00pm, 5:00pm, and 8:00pm**
- Sunday, December 25, 9:00am – **Christmas Day worship** (with Ben Welch, new Music Director)
- Saturday, December 31, 5:00pm – **New Year's Eve worship**
- Sunday, January 1, 9:00am – **New Year's Day worship**

LEARNING HOUR FOR ALL AGES...

On most Sundays, from 10:15am – 11:15am, your whole family has the opportunity to open the Bible and grow in relationship with the Lord. Make Sunday morning learning hour part of your weekly routine and your spiritual health.

- Pre-school through 5th graders in Sunday School in the south basement classrooms
- 6th through 12th graders in Youth Group in the “Choir Room” on the main level
- Young Adults through Senior Adults in the sanctuary or library/lounge

INCLEMENT WEATHER REMINDER

Winter weather has a way of changing our plans and keeping us in one spot. If the wind is blowing and the snow is falling, you may find yourself on a Saturday evening or Sunday morning wondering if we're still gathering for worship. As a rule of thumb, count on worship here at St. John's, no matter the conditions outside. Many of us live close enough that we could even walk to the church. We'll be here for worship. Please use your best judgment regarding your own safe attendance. If travel is not safe for you, stay home. You might even tune in to Bethel Lutheran Church televised worship service at 10am on WKOW-TV 27, or have your own time of prayer and scripture reading.

MIDWEEK ADVENT WORSHIP, WEDNESDAYS, 7:00PM

The month of December can get pretty busy. The hustle and bustle of gatherings and shopping, of baking and decorating can leave us out of breath. Much of what keeps us on the move in this month is enjoyable, yet some of the joy can get crowded out by tight schedules. In the midst of all the shuffle, what we might need the most – as impossible as it may seem to find – is time to sit and rest.

Wednesday evenings in Advent are a perfect time to be still and breathe deeply, to pray and to sing. Join in for a half hour service of worship on Wednesdays, November 30, December 7, 14, and 21, at 7:00pm, in the sanctuary. Our worship service on Wednesday, December 21, will also provide an opportunity to speak prayers for healing and receive anointing with oil for those with special concerns.

In the church calendar, most of December is the season of Advent. Advent means “coming”. It's a time of preparing for the coming of Christ, a time of hopeful expectation. In the midst of dark days, we'll light candles and wait for Christ together.

MINISTRY WITH YOUTH



**St. John's
Christmas Program**
Sunday, December 18, 2011
4:00 p.m.

Go Tell It on the Mountain!

Please join the children of St. John's Lutheran Church as they present the story of Jesus' birth. There will be lots of singing, with refreshments to follow.



Parents, please make sure your children are here for rehearsals. You should have received a schedule along with the songs the kids will be singing. Please practice these songs with your child. All rehearsals will be held during the Sunday school hour, with an important additional rehearsal on Saturday, December 17, from 2:00-4:00pm.

We are so excited to be doing the pageant again and look forward to seeing you all there. If anyone would like to volunteer to help, please give us a call.

If you have any questions, please call Raquel Michel at 882-4039.

SUNDAY MORNING YOUTH GROUP (6TH-12TH GRADE)

Join Carl Korfmacher, Kim Moran, and Deb Herbers for a fun time of conversation and reading the Bible. A fun group of 6-12th graders meets on Sunday mornings from 10:15am to 11:15am. Come be with friends and talk about faith. We'll meet in the “Choir Room” on the main level.

UPCOMING IN CONFIRMATION

On the four Wednesdays leading up to Christmas Day, we're adjusting the confirmation schedule and inviting families to participate in worship. We'll still meet from 6:00pm to 7:30pm on November 30, December 7, 14, and 21. At 7:00pm we will gather as a whole community for Midweek Advent Worship. Families, please join us for a half hour service of light and peace.

December Visionotes

DECEMBER WORSHIP HELPERS SCHEDULE: (G) GREETERS; (UTC) USHER TEAM CAPTAINS; (SBO) SOUND BOARD OPERATORS; (A) ACOLYTES; (N) NURSERY; (AG) ALTAR GUILD; (L) LECTORS; & (CH) COMMUNION HELPERS; (AM)ASS'T MINISTER; (PROJ) PROJECTIONIST. Please contact a replacement if you cannot assist at the times you are listed on the schedule; then immediately inform the church office, 882-4044, of the change. You will receive a reminder card the week you are to assist. **SAVE AND POST THIS SCHEDULE! We greatly appreciate your time in making St. John's a wonderful place in which to worship. Carolyn Butts, Music & Worship.**

Worship Steward - Carolyn Butts
UTC for December - Gary Hoff team

**December 3 & 4
Traditional Worship**

Poock, Becca	Accomp. Sat.
Magee, Sharon	Accomp. Sun.
Miller, Keith	AM
Leeder, Dee	CH
Herbers, Deb	CH
Davis, Ruby	AG
Drake, Dan	Proj.
Nelson, Erik	SBO
Carlson, McKenzie	Sat. A
Sunness, K., & Rinehardt, L.	Sun. A
Steindl, Bethany	Sat. Reader
Korfmacher, Louise	Sun. Reader
Ruchti, John & Jayne	G
Hatlen, Vonnice	G
Crans, Diana	G

**December 10 & 11
Contemporary Worship**

Greenleaf, Melanie	Accomp. Sat.
Eager, Amy	Accomp. Sun.
Butts, Carolyn	AM
Pomplun, Tammy	Proj.
Rauk, Maynard	CH
Korfmacher, Louise	CH
Schoenenberger, Ann	AG
Beedle, Butch	SBO
Eager, Anna	Sat. A
Carlson, C. & Naatz, Z.	Sun. A
Wethal, Karla	Sat. Reader
Jeans, Rollie	Sun. Reader
Herbers, Jeff & Deb	G
Andrew, Shelly	G
Helgesen, Dorothy	G

**December 17 & 18
Traditional Worship**

Greenleaf, Melanie	Accomp. Sat.
Magee, Sharon	Accomp. Sun.
Forster, Nicole	CH
Peterson, Eric	CH
Carlson, C. & Gober, A.	Sun. A
Drake, Dan	Proj.
VerKuilen, Steve	SBO
Hanson, Cheryl	Sat. Reader
Buss, Carol	Sun. Reader
Abey, Tonto & Pam	G
Miller, Gene & Sue	G



December Visionotes

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE, DECEMBER 11

The holidays are a happy time for most of us, but they can also bring sadness and pain to those grieving a loved one, whether the death was recent or in the distant past. Some have made peace with the death of someone dear but wish to spend a moment reflecting on the memories of a life shared. To all of these St. Paul Parish would like to extend an invitation to join us for a Service of Remembrance to be held Sunday, **December 11, from 7-8pm, at St. Paul Church on the corner of Garfield and First Streets.**

The service is intended for people of all faiths who wish to remember, honor, and celebrate their loved ones. It will include readings, music, prayer, quiet reflection, and a candle lighting ceremony to recall each person loved and honored this season. The service will be led by Pastor Matthew Poock from St. John's Lutheran Church.

Light refreshments and fellowship will follow the service in the lower level of the church. Every family will receive a homemade ornament to hang on their tree in remembrance of their loved one and a sprig of rosemary, the herb of remembrance.

The Service of Remembrance is being held in conjunction with the Compassionate Friends annual global candle lighting, which invites people around the world to light a candle from 7-8 p.m. the second Sunday in December to shine for loved ones who have died, most especially children. More information about the global candle lighting can be found at www.compassionatefriends.org.

The Service of Remembrance is free and open to all who wish to attend. If you have questions, or would like more information about the service, please contact Nancy Hurley at 608-882-4327 or NJH223@gmail.com. For help in coping with the loss of a loved one we invite you to visit www.agracehospicecare.org.

AED AND TRAINING

The initials AED stand for Automated External Defibrillator, which spells preparedness for a health-related emergency. Through St. John's financial gifts and matching funds from the local Masonic Lodge, an AED kit will become a new fixture for our church building. The church is a place for people of all ages, needs, and conditions to gather for prayer and refuge. This AED will help us to care for the needs of all who come here in the most responsible, advanced, and timely way possible. Our gratitude to our mason neighbors for helping us to be prepared and hospitable.

Upcoming in worship we will dedicate this AED to the glory of God and to the well-being of our community. We'll also host a community-wide training to diminish any fears of using an AED. Stay tuned for the training date, yet to be scheduled.

PARENTS CONNECT

When do parents get the opportunity to talk honestly with other parents? It can be hard to find the occasion to connect with other adults experiencing a similar life stage. St. John's Parenting Fellowship seeks to provide that connection and friendship. We'll meet next on **Saturday, December 10, at 10:30am**, in the fellowship hall and nursery. Join as you are able for an informal and enjoyable time for young children to play and their parents to connect and support each other. Childcare for the young ones will give parents the opportunity to learn about 123 Magic, a parenting strategy suited for children 2 to 12 years of age. Video segments each month give us topics for conversation. Bring your kids and a snack to share. We'll provide the main dish of lunch. St. John's members, guests, and friends are all welcome. Talk to Pastor Matt with ideas or questions or to let us know you're coming.

- A gift to the church endowment fund allows your charitable donations to grow over time, rather than having the principal spent for current needs.
- If your income increased over the past year, perhaps you can afford to make a small gift to the Endowment Fund. Even small gifts count up!
- It's also possible to give a gift of stock. If you give rather than sell it, no one pays taxes on it. Plus, you'll get a tax deduction for the full amount of the stock.
- It's always easy to procrastinate, thinking I'll do it tomorrow. Instead, "Start now!"

If you would like more information about the St. John's Endowment Fund, please call Ken Fenrick, Endowment Committee Chair at 882-5830.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE SEEKS VOLUNTEER

The Endowment Committee would like to add one more member to the team. The committee meets for quarterly sessions throughout the year. If you can do this ministry for St. John's, please contact the church office or Ken Fenrick at 882-5830.

Notes from a New Believer

The Stables Around You

By Lisa Marie Brodsky Auter

I think you'll agree that God undoubtedly cares for the weak, oppressed, and the poor. Look at Jesus. He could have been born a rich man with far more than he had. Instead, Jesus was born in a stable, in the poorest of places, to the poorest of people, in the poorest of ways.

This holiday season, challenge yourself to look at the stables around you. Is there a need you can fill? Is there a way you can help?

I pray the prayer: "*Lord, break my heart for what breaks yours.*" And lately, God has certainly done that. I have been exposed to so much need both in other countries and right in our own town (right in my own home). I have felt overwhelmed by it all. But God does not always call us to do the Big things (though if that's the case for you, bless you!). I'm starting to think that God wants us looking in stables, looking for ways we can surpass our own agenda and do what the Lord wills.

By all means, celebrate this season! Celebrate what God has blessed you with. Celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. This is most definitely a time of celebration. But don't forget to look around you – outside of your own safe walls. Look in the stables.

I wish you the happiest of holidays, and I thank you in advance for doing whatever thing you can to advance God's kingdom – in Evansville and the world.

That precious newborn baby in the stable smiles.



BAZAAR KITCHEN WORKERS – THANK YOU

What a wonderful time to share fellowship, in the bazaar kitchen! Thank you to all those who worked Friday and Saturday to help the kitchen run smoothly. Too many names to mention! What a blessing! It is a couple of busy days, but well worth the time we give to help make the bazaar a great success. Many people came in and shared how good the church smelled with the aroma of the turkey casserole and dressing. I am sure we all went home tired but feeling good inside that we could be part of another successful bazaar and contribute to God's work through St. John's.

Again, to all those who worked in the kitchen, thank you!

Judy Bratzke, Phyllis Hull, and Deb Fredendall, Chairpersons

2012-2014 COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Each year the congregation elects individuals to oversee the operations of our congregation and to plan and dream for the future of our mission and ministry. Serving on council is an important role of leadership and listening, prayer and service. Council elections will be held the first weekend in December, on the 3rd and 4th, alongside each worship service. The names of the faithful people you will see on the ballot are Eileen Meredith (second term), Kim Fiedler, Stephanie Kvalheim, Deb Nelson, and Karen Anderson.

RECEIVING NEW MEMBERS

On Sunday, November 20, we received these individuals as members of our congregation:

- Jeff Updike, with Andrew, Aaron, and Braden
- Cody Putnam
- Rick and Mary Lou Larson

St. John's welcomes you all into our church family! With your commitment to the Lord and to us, we commit ourselves to support you in faith. May God unite us into one body.

If you are interested in setting down roots with us and becoming a member of St. John's, talk to Pastor Matthew or call the church office.

PLANNING YOUR CHARITABLE GIVING

The St. John's Endowment Fund distributes financial gifts to our church and community organizations. Here are a few things you might consider this month as you contemplate your own end of year giving:



EVANSVILLE'S ECUMENICAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT, DECEMBER 4, 7:30PM

Local sopranos, tenors, altos, and basses have been hard at rehearsal for months to prepare a delightful concert of holiday music for the Evansville community. The concert is Sunday, December 4th, 7:30pm, at St. Paul Catholic Church, 39 Garfield Ave, Evansville. Many of our own St. John's members are adding their voices to the choir. The whole community is invited to enjoy this lively event with wonderful (and recognizable) Christmas music. The labor of practice is best redeemed by a large crowd of music appreciators. Hope to see you there!

EPIPHANY OPEN HOUSE, JANUARY 5

Epiphany is the day (the 6th of January each year) when the church celebrates Christ coming as savior to all the nations and as light of the whole world. In the Christmas story, it is the day which marks the visit of the three wise men to see the young Jesus.

On the eve of Epiphany you are invited to celebrate the coming of Christ at the home of the Poocks. Matt, Becca, and Eleanor welcome you for the second annual **Poock Open House, on Thursday, January 5, from 5:30pm to 8:00pm**. You won't find a supper meal, but you'll be greeted with delicious refreshments and joyful conversation. When cold temperatures outside keeping us hurrying from building to building, it's the perfect time of year to gather together in our homes and keep warm with each other's company. We also have much to celebrate: the conclusion of a beautiful Christmas season, a New Year in which to learn and grow, and the sheer joy of friendships, new and old. Come join the fellowship! On that night and others, you'll find us at [470 W Church St](#) in Evansville.

MUSIC DIRECTOR BEGINS IN JANUARY

January 2012 marks a new chapter in the music and worship life of St. John's. Our new music director Ben Welch is eager to begin serving in his role as accompanist, choir director, and praise team leader. He'll also work closely with our current accompanists and talented musicians. Who knows what more will come with music ministry at St. John's! Ben has

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been a church musician – including organist, pianist, and choir director – for 20 years. He resides in Madison and works full time in the music publishing industry. In anticipation of his 2012 start, Ben will lead us in music on Christmas Day 2011. Come for a preview with all our favorite carols. The weekend of January 7/8 will be his official beginning for worship leadership, and we'll commission him for ministry later that month. Please pray for Ben and his transition to our community, as well as the future of music and worship among us.

A NOTE FROM OUR TREASURER

Dear Members and Friends of St. John's Lutheran Church,

I have enjoyed being your treasurer this past year. With your grace and generosity, we have grown as a congregation that has added members, invited friends, and involved our youth. We have been able to reach out and give more to our synod, to feed the hungry, and to sponsor some of our youth for Lutherdale Bible Camp. It has been a blessing to watch our church family bond and grow in vitality.

We as stewards give to our church and to God's mission, and through that giving we actually show what grateful and generous people we are. As we look toward the close of 2011, I want to encourage you to continue your generous financial commitments to St. John's. If you have held back on your giving this year or are looking for a way to honor a loved one this holiday season, please think about bringing your giving up to date. You might also contribute to our Capital Expenditure or Endowment Funds. Let us take time to reflect and to be generous to God and our church this Christmas season! I would like to thank everyone for your faithful giving to St. John's. With everyone's continued efforts we will enter our new year financially strong!

Blessed Christmas to all!

Julie Creek-Hessler, Treasurer

P.S. Consider sharing your financial offering to St. John's through electronic funds transfer **Simply Giving**. It's easy to set up, and it helps keep your commitment to generosity. Forms are in the wall display case.

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ANNUAL REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

All council members, committees, and groups are reminded to have their annual reports to the church office no later than January 9. If you can email the report, we would greatly appreciate it.

THRIVENT

Thank you to all those who again chose to use their Thrivent Choice Dollars and give to St. John's. Unless specified, your contribution will go to our daily ministry General Fund. Your generosity is a tremendous gift.

TO ALL BAZAAR WOMEN AND MEN

Thank you, thank you, thank you! We can't say it enough to all of you who made the bazaar another successful year. There were many countless hours of planning and organizing through the good times and bad times (but mainly good ☺). If it wasn't for each and everyone one at St. John's it would not have been the success it was. It's remarkable how our entire community pulls together and contributes.

Although the benefit to our congregation is far beyond the money raised, the dollars do add up to some significant generosity to further our mission. Minus expenses, we will have received well over \$11,000. Praise the Lord for all the joy and fun and generosity! The monies will go toward replacing the church building's south-side windows (facing the parking lot), and 10% of proceeds will help fight against malaria in Africa through the ELCA Malaria Campaign (www.elca.org/malaria). May God Bless You All!

We have had the pleasure of being bazaar chairpersons for 2010 and 2011. We are turning over the job to two new willing and faithful persons. Talk to us or contact the church office to learn more. Merry Christmas and God's blessing be with you and your families. Love, Diana Crans and Barb Howard

Pastor's note: As much fun as it is to turn the church building upside down and pour ourselves into this bubbling event, we don't do it just for the fun of it. We do it for love...love of the Lord, love of each other, and love for this church. God is doing great things here, in and through us at St. John's. Our heartfelt thanks to Diana and Barb for all of their love, and for leading the way.

NOTES FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

PIGGLY WIGGLY RECEIPTS



Our local grocery receipts add up! Each month we receive over a hundred dollars from the Piggly Wiggly, which is 1% of our receipts submitted. These funds go to support youth ministry at St. John's. How important it is to save your receipts! Simply bring them to St. John's (to the "collection area") and place them in the box in the narthex (the gathering area outside the sanctuary). Thanks to Jim and Jean Kopecky for their generosity, and to you for bringing your receipts!

CAMPBELL CANS – PEEL THOSE LABELS!

Every time we open a can of Campbell soup provides us with an opportunity to serve our schools. Simply save your labels and bring them in to the church building. There's a "collection area" in the narthex (gathering area) to place them. All the labels are then given to the Evansville Elementary School. What a great and simple way to give to the community!

BOX TOP\$ FOR EDUCATION

Check your household products and see if there is a small "Box Top\$ for Education" square coupon on it. If so, cut it out and bring it to the "collection area" in the narthex (gathering area) at St. John's. The Box Top\$ are used to help defray the cost of playground equipment for our local schools. It's a simple way to give that just takes an extra minute.

YOU CAN DO IT!



Remember to save your aluminum cans and bring them to the church building. The drop off spot is a barrel in the fellowship hall, at the east door, behind the piano. The cans add up to dollars, and the money goes in the capital expenditure fund. Thanks to all who make this a regular habit!

FLOWERS FOR THE SANCTUARY

The 2012 Flower Chart is posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall and ready for you to pick your weekend for sharing flowers with the congregation for worship. Thank you to everyone who shared memories, anniversaries, birthdays, and occasions by beautifying our sanctuary with God's creations this past year.



ELCA GOOD GIFTS – A GIVING ALTERNATIVE

Giving gifts is a great thing to do. It's one of the primary ways we show love to one another. For most of us, the holiday season has many opportunities to share gifts with those who are dear to us. This gift-giving tradition is a reflection of the gifts that God gives to us, and particularly the gift of God's son Jesus, born to us. As you purchase and exchange gifts this season, you might also consider including people around the world in your generosity.



ELCA Good Gifts make great gifts for your loved ones and carry that love on to others, making a difference in their lives and the world. In the ELCA Good Gifts catalog, discover the life-changing ministry we do together as a response to Christ's love in our lives. With an ELCA Good Gift for World Hunger, you can:

- provide fresh water for an entire community
- give a goat to provide families with food, funds, and fertilizer
- plant an orchard to bear good, nutritious fruit for years to come
- offer a micro-credit loan to help a woman start a small business
- help a child buy school supplies

Pick up a catalog in the narthex (gathering area) or visit www.elca.org/goodgifts for more information.

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY

COMING IN 2012

Mark your calendars for **Thursday, January 19, 2012**. This date is the beginning of your journey toward experiencing peace in your financial life. On this day you have the opportunity to preview a new class to be led at St. John's. Pastor Matt and Becca Poock have taken the course and give it their highest recommendation. Julie Creek-Hessler (recent course alum) and Kristian Finfrock (financial advisor) will lead the way here at St. John's.



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Financial Peace University (FPU) consists of a 13-week video curriculum—taught by financial expert Dave Ramsey—that incorporates small-group discussions to encourage accountability and discipleship. More than 1.5 million families have attended *Financial Peace University* with amazing results. On average, these families paid off \$5,300 in debt and saved \$2,700 in just the first 90 days! This life-changing program teaches us to achieve our financial goals by eliminating debt, saving for the future, and giving like never before. We will be challenged and motivated to make a plan for our money and change our family tree forever. *Financial Peace University* is highly entertaining for everyone, with a unique combination of humor, informative financial advice and biblical messages.

Here's what people are saying about FPU:

FPU Answers Questions "Almost every class helped us to look at our finances in a totally different way. It answered questions that we had in the past but were probably too embarrassed to ask. For the first time in 15 years of marriage, we are on the exact same page with our finances. This class has truly been a blessing to our marriage and our family."

-Angie Palmer Muscatine, IA

Financial Peace University (FPU) Gives Hope "After taking the class, we now have hope. During the 13 weeks, we had people in our class saving \$1,000 for the first time. We had people become debt-free. One marriage was mended." *-Don and Linda Lesovsky Lakewood, CO*

Financial Peace University classes meet for two hours each week for 13 weeks. The first lesson is totally free! All you have to do is register to attend. Julie and Kristian will be available immediately after the free lesson if you wish to purchase your family membership and attend the full course. Family memberships cost \$100 and include all class materials. The course content starts with baby steps and progresses to credit, insurance, and investing. Sign up after worship or by calling the office.

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CAPTIVE FREE AND KIDS AGAINST HUNGER

February 10-12, 2012, at St. John's will be a weekend unlike any we've had before, filled with music and mission service! On Friday February 10, at 7:00pm, the band Captive Free will present a concert and family program here at St. John's. Captive Free is a group of outstanding young adult musicians touring all over the Great Lakes region. Based out of St. Paul, MN, and hosted by an organization called Youth Encounter, Captive Free brings high energy, awesome music, loads of fun, and a great message. After the concert, youth are invited to play games and hang out.

On Saturday, Captive Free will lead us in an on-site mission project called **Kids Against Hunger**. The mission of Kids Against Hunger, a humanitarian food-aid organization, is to significantly reduce the number of hungry children in the USA and to feed starving children throughout the world. Captive Free will show us how to package a highly nutritious, vitamin-fortified soy-rice casserole to be distributed to starving children and their families in over 60 countries. The contents of each meal cost \$0.25, and we'll package 6000 meals! Mission volunteers (limit of 50 individuals) will help to cover the cost of the meals we package, as will the whole congregation.

Captive Free will also lead us in worship on Saturday, 5:00pm and Sunday, 9:00am. An adult education hour on Sunday at 10:15am will be a time to learn more about Captive Free, Kids Against Hunger, and global hunger.

