

St. John's January 2012

# *Visionotes*

# High Hopes For 2012!

“Hope does not disappoint us,  
because God’s love has been poured  
into our hearts through the Holy Spirit  
that has been given to us.”

– *Holy Bible, Romans 5:5*



 **St. John's**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

312 South Third Street  
Evansville, WI 53536

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

Address Service  
Requested

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PAID  
Permit No. 3  
Evansville, WI  
NON-PROFIT

**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 Pooch	352-0418
Parish Secretary	Deb Fredendall	882-4044
Music Director	Ben Welch	513-1062
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
Becca Pooch	515-230-8286

**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 Education	Julie Creek Hessler	882-2560
Life and Growth	Steve Ver Kuilen	882-6775
Youth Ministry	Andy Lehman	882-6720
Stewardship	Kristian Finrock	347-7301
Music and Worship	Vonnie Hatlen	882-4707
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**

Ron Carlsen  
Al Hipke  
Charlotte Radtke

**Family and Friends**

Neil Kuenzli  
Claire Renz  
Lori Mortensen  
Randy Rinehart  
Bennett Barelmann  
Esther Brodsky Mutter  
David Steifner

**Julee Devlin**

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

**Men and Women in Service**

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

**Our Condolences to:**

The family of **Rowland Straka.** May the Holy Spirit enfold you in peace.

**Our Congratulations to Those who Celebrated an Anniversary:**

**Doug & Vonnie Hatlen** on their 39th. May God bless and enrich your marriage in the years to come.

Thank you to our St. John's family and friends for remembering us with cards, good wishes, and gifts upon the celebration of our 50th wedding anniversary. God has been very good to us all these years, and we count our many blessings. The good people at St. John's only strengthen our faith that when God is in our lives, life is good.

- Maynerd & Darlene Rauk



Thanks to all of the volunteers who have helped out at the Care Closet in 2011. Those volunteers are: Deb Jorgensen, Pam Keisler, Jeanette Almond, Barb Patterson, Georgia Bovre, Dorothy Helgesen, Phyllis Hull, Lee Eckenberg, Laurie Muchow, Ann Olson, Marj Hipke, Sherry Crull and Dee Leeder.

If anyone is interested in volunteering at the Care Closet, please call Linda Gallagher at 882-4233, St. John's Volunteer Coordinator.



**MORE THAN HALF FULL**

Are you an optimist, or a pessimist? Optimism is the human tendency to expect that all things will work out for the best. It's the belief that goodness will prevail over evil. Pessimism would be just the opposite, believing that the worst is likely to happen and that problems and hardships will continue. The tell-tale test for your outlook on life involves a half glass of water: do you see it as half full, or half empty?

Researchers have long declared the benefits of an optimistic outlook on life. Studies have shown that optimists are significantly healthier than pessimists, experiencing less frequent illness and recovering quicker than their counterparts. Optimists live longer, manage stress better, and display greater persistence.

On the other hand, pessimists would argue that optimists suffer from naiveté and set themselves up for disappointment. Pessimists usually call themselves realists. To their credit, a study out of Central Michigan University suggests that pessimists are wiser at gambling. I don't know about you, but the benefits of optimism seem stronger.

Nonetheless, recent national polls show that Americans are increasingly pessimistic about our future. A majority now believes that our best days are behind us. Surveys reveal that economic pessimism is at the highest recorded rates ever. Some of our national pessimism is based on the realities of high unemployment, the national debt, the rise of China, and the financial crisis in Europe. American families feel deflated about the job market, uncertain about the stock market, and fearful about their personal finances. It doesn't take a pessimist to say that we face some serious challenges in our world, but the tidal wave of pessimism seems to be self-perpetuating. Pessimism can be a powerful force.

Maybe what we all need is a healthy dose of optimism to promote our collective recovery, health, and well-being. I recently heard a story about a

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**January Visionotes**

young man and his family who exemplify the power of optimism. As a freshman at Luther College (my alma mater) in Decorah, IA, Chris Norton played defensive tackle on the football team. In a routine play in the fall of 2010, Chris suffered a broken neck and compressed spinal cord. Doctors gave Chris a 3% chance of regaining any use of his lower body. Chris refused to listen to that statistic. With intense therapy, courage, and determination, Chris is on the road to a major recovery. With the support of his family and community, he's already standing and walking with assistance. He returned to classes this fall.

Last month on the CBS *Early Show* Chris Norton was announced as "America's Choice Honor for Courage in Sports." When asked how they have faced the challenges, the Norton family testifies that their "faith in God" has given them the strength to persevere. Chris says that they kept trusting that things would work out. They encouraged each to be positive and believe the best. This is more than optimism. Chris' story is about the power of hope.

Hope for the future is at the heart of our Christian faith. As people who trust Christ, we believe that hard times will get better, one way or another, in this life and in the life to come. Our hope is in the Lord our God, and "hope does not disappoint us" (Romans 5:5). This hope is not passive. Inactive hope is foolish and makes God into a magic genie. Active hope, the kind of hope Chris Norton exemplifies, is faithful living. God gives us hope, and true hope sets us into motion.

I think our God sees the glass more than half full. Our God is a God of hope. God not only expects things to work out for the best, God *works* all things out for the best. God not only believes that goodness will prevail over evil, our good God *prevails* over evil. As we enter 2012, we who trust Jesus Christ have every reason to have hope for the future. Let's get our hope going.



*For to this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.*

- 1 Timothy 4:10

**January Visionotes**

**JANUARY 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	Drake, Dan	Proj.
UTC for January - Tonto Abey team	Brummond, Scott	SBO
Altar Guild for January - Oakeson & Miller	Stadt, S. & Auter, A.	N

**December 31 & Jan. 1**

**Traditional Worship**

Greenleaf, Melanie	Accomp. Sat.
Fellows, Catherine	Accomp. Sun.
Fredendall, Deb & Nelson, Nancy	AM
Herbers, Jon	SBO
Auter, Aislyn & Juen, Lexi	Sun. A
Helgesen, Dorothy	G
Golz, Carol	G
Schoenenberger, Ann	G

**January 7 & 8**

**Contemporary Worship**

Greenleaf, Melanie	Accomp. Sat.
Eager, Amy & Welch, Ben	Accomp. Sun.
Kvalheim, Stephanie	AM
Pomplun, Tammy	Proj.
Crans, Diana	CH
Peterson, Eric	CH
Johnson, Bob	SBO
Bergum, K. & Rinehart, A.	N
VanFossen, B. & Forster, A.	Sun. A
Larson, Amy	Sat. Reader
Brice, Mindy	Sun. Reader
Leeder, D. & Golz, C.	G
Gallagher, L. & Persons, S.	G

**January 14 & 15**

**Traditional Worship**

Poock, Becca	Accomp. Sat.
Welch, Ben	Accomp. Sun.
Updike, Jeff	AM
Fredendall, Deb	CH
Bratzke, Judy	CH
Eager, Anna	Sat. A
Speropulos, H. & Forster, A.	Sun. A

Persons, Dave	Sat. Reader
Schneeberger, Steve	Sun. Reader
Larson, Jamie & Amy	G
Sunness, Norm & Alisa	G

**January 21 & 22**

**Contemporary Worship**

Welch, Ben	Accomp. Sat.
Welch, Ben	Accomp. Sun.
Nelson, Erik	AM
Pomplun, Tammy	Proj.
Wethal, Karla & Karen	CH
Herbers, Jeff	SBO
Bennett, R. & Rinehart, A.	N
Replogle, C. & Nash, J.	Sun. A
Krajcek, Karen	Sat. Reader
Jeans, Rollie	Sun. Reader
Stokstad, Kevin & Jennifer	G
Crocker, Allan & Kaye	G

**January 28 & 29**

**Contemporary Worship**

Greenleaf, Melanie	Accomp. Sat.
Magee & Welch	Accomp. Sun.
Butts, Carolyn	AM
O'Leary, Craig & Linda	CH
Brummond, Scott	SBO
Butts, C. & Reese, H.	N
Persons, Cora & Kailey	Sun. A
Fredendall, Deb	Sat. Reader
Updike, Jeff	Sun. Reader
Drake, Dan & Lori	G
Craven, LaVonne	G
Hatlen, Vonnice	G

**Resolutions: Living Every Day in a Holy Way**

by Lisa Marie Brodsky Auter

It's January. The holidays are over. Now what are we thinking about? Resolutions. Those sometimes lofty or attainable goals we lay out for the upcoming year. Do we lose weight? Spend less time on the computer? Spend more time with the kids? Take more walks? Be nicer to a difficult co-worker? What are your resolutions?

But the new year doesn't have to be about hope turning into perceived failure. We can make every day count as a holy day - by being intentional about *living* our lives in a holy way.

You can still use your resolution list for this. You can still try to lose weight, but do it for the right reason: to be full of the Living Water Jesus wishes to give, to be full of spiritual food, not the junk food we crave. We can still spend less time on the computer, but make it holy by spending more time in God's Word and in God's presence. We can still spend more time with the kids, take more walks, be nicer to that co-worker. All this can be done with *holiness* in mind. With Jesus in mind.

So don't think of resolutions as lofty goals that you make and break by the end of the month. Be intentional about living every day in a holy way. Be the hands and feet of Jesus. Count blessings as you drive to work in the morning or as you wake up to start your day. There are so many opportunities to start over this year, no matter how bad the last year has been. God gives us each a new day, makes us a new creation:

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV)*

This is a time of new beginnings! God forgives you every day. Let past transgressions go and walk each day fully in the light of the Lord. I wish you a very Happy New Year. May blessings fall upon you like snowflakes: unique and in abundance.

**Death of Rowland Straka**

Dear Friends & Relatives,

For the last several months Rowland had not been feeling well with various medical issues. He suffered a stroke and passed away peacefully on Friday morning, December 16th, in his home with family. Sorry to share this sad news with you during this time of year, but he will now be celebrating Christmas with the Lord in heaven.

We will be having graveside services at the Tahoma Veteran's Cemetery in Kent, WA, on Wednesday, January 11, 2012.

If you care to send a memorial, please share with the charity or church of your choice, or the St. Jude Children's Research.



**LIFE TOGETHER**

**IN OUR WORSHIP...**

- Saturday, December 31, 5:00pm and Sunday, January 1, 9:00am – **Worship Service of Readings and Holiday Carols**, a festive way to ring in the New Year
- Sunday, January 8, 9:00am – **Presentation of Automated External Defibrillator (AED)** for the St. John's church building
- Sunday, January 15, 9:00am – **Church Council Installation** for 2012
- Saturday, January 21 and Sunday, January 22 – **Commissioning Ben Welch, Music Director**
- Sunday, January 29, 9:00am – **Receiving New Members**
- Sunday, February 5, 9:00am – **Sunday School children sing**
- Saturday, February 11, 5:00pm and Sunday, February 12, 9:00am – **Special guests Captive Free**, a music and youth ministry team, with us for a weekend long event

**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. After a holiday break on January 1, the learning hour **resumes on January 8** for the entire month. Make Sunday morning learning hour part of your weekly routine and your spiritual health.

- Pre-school through 5<sup>th</sup> graders in Sunday School in the south basement classrooms
- 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders in Youth Group in the "Choir Room" on the main level
- Adults in the library/lounge

## ADULT EDUCATION (SUNDAYS, 10:15AM)

- January 8: Join Mary Beaver, local emergency responder, for **training on our new Automated External Defibrillator (AED)** and the latest techniques of CPR
- January 15: **Financial Basics** with Kristian Finfrock, a fitting introduction to our new, upcoming class Financial Peace University (see article for details on FPU)
- January 22: Spend an hour getting to know **Ben Welch** as a person, musician, and new St. John's music director
- January 29: our **Annual Meeting** will be a celebration of ministry and a preview of the year to come

## POOCK OPEN HOUSE

Join Pastor Matt, Becca, and Eleanor for the **second annual Poock Open House, on Thursday, January 5, from 5:30pm to 8:00pm**. This warm event takes place on the eve of Epiphany (the 6<sup>th</sup> of January each year). Epiphany is the day 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. The lights will all be on as we gather for delicious refreshments and the joy of 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. All are welcome!

## PARENTS CONNECT

Young parents of St. John's are walking the journey of parenthood together. One Saturday a month we gather informally with our kids to learn, play, eat, and connect. This month we meet on **Saturday, January 14, at 10:30am**, in the fellowship hall and nursery. On our monthly agenda is to learn more about parenting strategies, enjoy conversation, share the ups and downs of daily life, play with our children, and eat lunch. St. John's members, guests, and friends are all welcome. Bring your kids and a side dish to share. Talk to Pastor Matt for details.

little bit of curiosity you'll come check out a rehearsal or come find me. The goal is that everyone can be comfortable participating in whatever capacity they wish. I also welcome your input about anything that you'd like to hear... as the song says, "We are the church-TOGETHER."

I'll be at St. John's almost every Sunday (plus occasional Saturday nights), and on top of participating in worship I'll often be found in the music room sifting through choral music or practicing a new prelude on the piano. By all means come find me if you'd like to chat (any topic, from music to Star Wars to Aaron Rodgers, is fair game!). My "door" is ALWAYS open.

Thank you all for the opportunity to serve and worship with you. I look forward to meeting everyone. One last thing, though: I am notoriously bad at remembering names, so please do not take offense if I need some reminders for a little while. I promise I'll study every night until I remember them all!

Yours In Christ,  
**Ben Welch**

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## Agrace HospiceCare to Offer Three Grief Support Opportunities in January

In January, Agrace HospiceCare will begin a new grief support series, offer a recurring support group and provide an introductory session for those grieving the death of a loved one. All of the sessions are open to the public and are provided without charge. All groups are held at Agrace HospiceCare, 3001 W. Memorial Drive in Janesville, unless otherwise noted.

- **Journey Through Grief** will be held January 17 – February 28 (Tuesdays), from 10:00 a.m. – noon. Call Fran Coan-Meredith at (608) 314-2919 to register.
- **Agrace HospiceCare's Janesville Social Group** will be held Tuesday, January 17, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. This group is held at Ground Round, 2753 Milton Ave., Janesville. Call Linda at (608) 757-1379 to register.
- **Introduction to Grief** is an informative session for adults that offers suggestions on how to navigate the grieving process and provides information about Agrace HospiceCare grief support groups. This session is available by appointment only. Call Fran Coan-Meredith at (608) 314-2919.

## Beloit Regional Hospice To Hold Training Sessions for Volunteers

A two day training session will be held on Saturdays, January 14th & 28th, 9:00 am to 3:00pm at Beloit Regional Hospice, 655 Third Street, Suite 200, Beloit, WI, 53511. You must attend both days. Reserve your spot by Jan. 6th by calling 608-363-7421 or 877-363-7421.

## A LIFE OF MUSIC – MEET BEN WELCH

Greetings, members and friends of St. John's Lutheran Church! My name is Benjamin Welch (call me Ben, please), and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to praise the Lord through music with all of you. In any new experience there is always a period of "Hi, how are you, tell us about yourself." While I welcome you to seek me out and ask those questions and more, I thought I'd take a pre-emptive strike at some introductions.

I grew up in Oconomowoc, WI, and presently live in Madison with my wife (and high school sweetheart) Marisa and our three dogs. I took my first piano lesson at the age of 5, when my mother noticed that I kept sitting at the family piano and wanting to know how to "make it work." She asked a member of our church if they'd take on a student so young, thus setting in motion a life spent studying, performing, and enjoying music. Along the way – sometimes on my own and sometimes with a little "prodding," I added percussion, the organ, and singing to my repertoire.

Eventually I attended Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa, and graduated with a degree in Piano Performance. These days when I'm not at home or church I work as a keyboard music Editor at Hal Leonard Corporation, the world's largest sheet music publisher (so they say). I also play the occasional extra music "gig" around the area, and have even found some time to record a few piano CDs in a makeshift home studio.

When I'm NOT working with music in some capacity (which is not often), Marisa and I enjoy the typical "frivolities" like games and movies, watching the Brewers or Packers, and going to the dog park. One of our dogs is a Therapy Dog, officially registered with The Delta Society, so we also volunteer our (and his) time visiting those in need of a smile. Hopefully that gives you a bit of a picture of me, and hopefully I'll get a chance to get to know all of you down the road.

Now, on to other business: while I'd be happy just to be a part of the excitement at St. John's, I also have the privilege of serving as the Music Director. I'll be working with the Adult Choir and leading the Praise Team (with some help), plus playing the piano & organ. I was ecstatic to find that there is SO MUCH MUSIC in the library here already, and I am only just scratching the surface as I sort through things. But we won't just be resting on what has already been done, I am looking forward to finding some NEW music and moving forward in that direction, too.

Rumor has it that we have quite a few dedicated folks participating in those groups already, and I hope that if you have even a

## FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY TO BEGIN

**Thursday, January 19, 2012, at 7:00pm** is the free preview night to a 13-week course that could dramatically change your life, financially and spiritually. On this first night we meet for about one hour at St. John's with Julie Creek-Hessler, recent course alum; Kristian Finfrock, financial advisor; and Dave Ramsey, financial expert and author who teaches us via video.

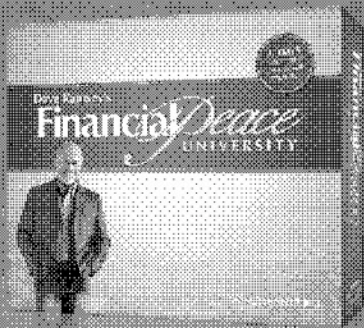
Following the free preview night, *Financial Peace University* classes will meet for two hours each week for 13 weeks (Thursdays, 7:00-9:00pm). Each night we will watch an engaging and humorous video, then share conversation and support. Course leaders Julie and Kristian will be available immediately after the free preview for you to register for the full course, if you so choose, and to purchase your family membership. The cost of \$100 per household includes all class materials and lifetime access to resources. The course content starts with baby steps and progresses to debt, credit, insurance, giving, and investing. Dave Ramsey's guarantee is simply this: "If you do it, it works! If you don't do it, it won't work!" If you work the program, you won't want your money back. If you don't work the program, you don't get your money back.

Who is this course for? FPU is for EVERYONE! From the financially secure to the financially distressed. Over 1 million families and individuals have attended *Financial Peace University*. Applying God's Word radically changes your life. If you want to grow in wisdom and peace with your finances and faith, join us. Everyone truly benefits from this program, regardless of your age; regardless of your income; regardless of being single, married, or a single parent. Your spouse and teens living in the home are also invited with you.

**Here's what people just like you are saying about FPU:** "We've actually relieved ourselves of over \$50,000 worth of debt in two years just from using these principles" (Russ and Mary Lee). "It made us sit down as a couple and communicate... and it gave us an instant pay raise" (Paul and Lynesa Benson)! See [www.daveramsey.com/fpu](http://www.daveramsey.com/fpu) or talk to Julie Creek-Hessler, Kristian Finfrock, or Pastor Matt for more information.



# FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY CLASSES START SOON!



*Financial Peace University* is a program that teaches you how to beat debt, build wealth and live like never before!

More info:

Thursday, January 19, 2012  
@7:00pm

Right here  
@ St. John's Lutheran Church

Contact the church office for details.

## Everyday Ways To Make A Difference

### 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 (\$88.00 this month) 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. You'll get a reminder from the office the week prior. Thank you to everyone who helped beautify our sanctuary this past year by sharing memories, anniversaries, birthdays, and special occasions.

## ANNUAL REPORTS, ANNUAL MEETING

All council members, committees, and groups are reminded to have their annual reports to the church office no later than January 9, 2012. This is an important way to share about our ministries and activities with the whole congregation. If you can email the report, we would greatly appreciate it.

The Annual Meeting of St. John's is scheduled for **Sunday, January 29, following 9:00am worship**. All members in good standing are asked to be present for the business of the congregation. We will hear reports, reflect on the previous year, look ahead to 2012, and approve our operating budget. This meeting is an annual reminder that together we share the responsibility and joy of God's work among us.

## 2012 CHURCH COUNCIL

Eleven gifted individuals will serve St. John's on church council for 2012. This group is called to oversee the ministry of our congregation and to plan for the future of our mission. The faithful people serving on council for 2012 are:

Eileen Meredith, Kim Fiedler, Stephanie Kvalheim, Deb Nelson, Karen Anderson, Steve VerKuilen, Julie Creek-Hessler, Kristian Finfrock, Vonnie Hatlen, Bob Johnson, and David Stadt.

These leaders will be commissioned for service during worship on Sunday, January 15. Please keep the church council and the future of our congregation in your prayers, that God would lead us forward to make a difference in our community and that we would follow God's lead.

Our gratitude goes out to four council members ending their service on council: Ken Johnson, Andy Lehman, Ken Reese, and Janice Schuh. Being on council is an important way to serve our congregation, and we thank you for your time and investment. We look forward to your continued ministry with us in other ways. Special recognition and thanks to Ken Reese for serving as President for several years. Praise God for Ken, Andy, Ken, and Janice.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the midst of winter weather, 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. Please use your best judgment regarding your own safe attendance. If travel is not safe for you, stay home.

## NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED

St. John's recently received a group of new members. A warm welcome to...

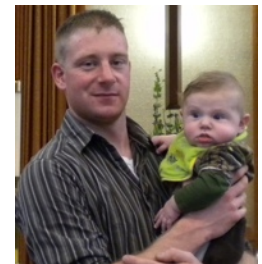
- Jeff Updike, with sons Aaron, Andrew, and Braden. Jeff grew up at St. John's (his parents are Duane and Mary Updike, currently in Florida) and is returning home here. Jeff is a mechanical designer for Stoughton Trailers and coaches football and basketball at Evansville High School. Jeff also enjoys music and is married to Linda. Aaron is a junior, Andrew is a freshman, and Braden is a 6<sup>th</sup> grader in our confirmation ministry. Jeff says that St. John's is the right place for him and his family.
- Rick and MaryLou Larson are glad to be returning to St. John's. MaryLou is an ER nurse at UW Hospital. Rick is a civil engineer working with software and travels regularly. Both enjoy weightlifting, fitness, and Bible study. They have three grown children: daughters Frankie and Charlie and son Erik. The Larsons feel that St. John's is the best place for them to nurture their faith.
- Cody Putnam joins his wife Stacie (Crocker) Putnam in membership. Together they are proud parents of Tucker, born this summer and baptized in November along with his dad. Cody works in the field of HVAC, and Stacie is a nurse at Monroe Clinic. Cody spends some of his favorite hours outdoors, hunting and fishing. Cody is glad to belong to St. John's as a united family.



Jeff & Braden  
Updike



Rick & MaryLou  
Larson



Cody & Tucker  
Putnam

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## NEW MEMBER CLASS ON JANUARY 15

Know someone who is ready to learn more about our congregation? Interested in making a commitment to the life and ministry of St. John's Lutheran Church? We invite you to join Pastor Matthew Pooch and Parish Secretary Deb Fredendall for a one-time Membership Orientation on **Sunday, January 15, 2011, from 12:30pm to 2:30pm**. We'll have some time to get to know one another, learn about the ministry of St. John's, discuss some of the basics of our faith, and consider any questions you may have. Our time promises to be enjoyable and informative. Refreshments will be served, and childcare for young ones is available upon request.

To reserve your spot, call the office at 882-4044, email our parish secretary Deb at [secretary@stjohns-lc.org](mailto:secretary@stjohns-lc.org), or sign up at the welcome desk just outside the worship space. If the date and time won't work in your schedule, let us know that, too, for future planning of orientation sessions. We plan for those who participate in this Membership Orientation (and desire to become members) to be received into membership at 9:00am worship on January 29.

## COUNCIL NEWS

In our December meeting, the church council received a report on a series of staff reviews. Our thanks to Steve Ver Kuilen and his team for meeting with all of our regularly paid staff to address job performance and position updates. The review team affirmed something we all know – we have a great staff! Our staff members are not only competent in their work, they enjoy it. Our staff members regularly go above and beyond the call of duty because they love this church. The church council expresses our shared appreciation for all staff, including Deb Fredendall, Shelly Andrew, Raquel Michel, Peck and Joan Sperry, and Judy Bratzke.

In other business, the church council approved an operating budget for 2012. This budget goes to the congregation for final approval at our Annual Meeting on January 29. The 2012 proposed budget is based on

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## NOTES FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

### OFFICE HOURS FOR PARISH SECRETARY

Monday – Thursday: 8:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

## FAITHFUL SERVANTS

We can't say enough good things about the dedicated people that we have at St. John's.

The Men's Group comes in each Tuesday and does "odd jobs" around the church. Many times these odd jobs are "big jobs." Regular members of the group are: Rollie Jeans, Howard Kruger, Neil Lien, Al Hipke, Bob Johnson, Al Crocker, and Scott Fredendall. If you have Tuesday mornings free, stop in and join the guys. Again, thank you so much for all you do for your church family.

Our counting team handles with great care our weekly offerings. Our thanks to these faithful stewards: Eileen Meredith, Phyllis Hull, Al Hipke, and Nancy Nelson for your diligent and trustworthy service.

The office staff is blessed to have great servants who drop everything and come in to help with mailings, pew organization, and preparation of the Visionotes. Thank you to Pam Keisler, Amy Martinson, Glenace Smelcer, Shirley Harvey, Barb Patterson, Al Hipke, Marj Hipke, Marie Gallman, and Doris McCaslin for being some of the most recent ones to say "yes" when we need extra help.

A big thank you also goes out to those who usher, operate the soundboard, run the projection, greet worshipers, read scripture, serve as assisting ministers, sing in the choir, and much more. The list includes too many names to mention you all. A special dose of gratitude to everyone who helped make our Christmas Eve worship such a joyous occasion. You are a blessing. What a joy to have an active church! Praise God!

## LEARNING HOUR REMINDER

Our Sunday morning hour of Christian education is on holiday break January 1, 2012. Learning hour for all ages resumes on January 8, 2012.

## HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH TO NEW ORLEANS

Plans and preparations are underway for 11 youth and 2 adults from St. John's to participate in the ELCA National Youth Gathering. This major event brings thousands of youth to New Orleans from July 18-22, 2012. You may have noticed the beginning of fundraising efforts to help cover the cost. A Sunday morning brunch and popcorn sales have already proven successful, thanks to your generosity. Our youth and parents are motivated to make this trip an experience of a lifetime. And we need your ongoing help to do it. Would you consider teaming up in prayer and finances with our youth?

- A sponsorship provides a youth with at least \$50 towards the cost of the trip AND a personal prayer partner. This is a one-on-one, personal connection between a sponsor 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 for you to join the youth as they discover more about God and what God's up to in the world. Contact the church office or Becca Poock [beccapooock@gmail.com](mailto:beccapooock@gmail.com) to join them either as a sponsor or partner as they prepare for New Orleans!

### HELP WANTED

St. John's Lutheran Church has the month of February to deliver Meals on Wheels to local Evansville area residents.

Please consider some time in your schedule to be a volunteer. Call Glenace Smelcer at 882-5726 to reserve your day or days to deliver.

last year's budget, while including some significant increases for worship and outreach. The council is confident that these increases in expenditures are the best way to prepare for our future. We have great hope for the days ahead, and we are ready to live into the future. At the same time, these increases in expenditures require faith in our ability to give generously and contribute financially with our offerings. Consider increasing your giving contributions to St. John's in 2012, so that we might do more of God's work together.

### THE 2011 BAZAAR REPORT

With all receipts counted and all expenses dispersed, the Annual Holiday Bazaar held on Saturday, November 19, 2011, reports an official total of \$11,531! What a show of hard work, community effort, and generosity! Word has it, that's the highest net total we've had to date. Every year builds on the great foundation of the previous years. This dollar amount is a win for so many reasons. The sense of accomplishment and community at St. John's is strengthened. Funds for new windows on the south side of the building (facing the parking lot) are ready to allow replacement of aging windows. And new this year, 10% of proceeds – \$1153 – will be put to work by health organizations to help end malaria in Africa. Awesome! We're building community, taking care of our resources, and helping others in need. This sounds a lot like the Christian life, and we're living it together. Way to go, St. John's!

To learn more about the ELCA Malaria Campaign (our national church organization fighting malaria and receiving our 10% gift), visit [www.elca.org/malaria](http://www.elca.org/malaria).



## A WEEKEND OF MUSIC AND MISSION

Mark your calendars now for **February 10-12, 2012**, at St. John's. You won't want to miss these high-energy, impactful events for youth, families, and people of all ages.

- **On Friday February 10, at 7:00pm, the band Captive Free will present a concert and family program.** Captive Free is a group of outstanding young adult musicians touring all over the Great Lakes region. Hosted by an organization called Youth Encounter, Captive Free brings awesome music, loads of fun, and a great message.
- **After the Friday night concert, youth are invited to play games and hang out into the night.**
- **On Saturday, Captive Free will lead us in an on-site mission project for 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.
- **In worship on Saturday, 5:00pm and Sunday, 9:00am, Captive Free will lead the way** with music and message.
- **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.



**Kids Against Hunger**  
Feeding families around the world...and around the corner.

## MINISTRY WITH YOUTH

### SUNDAY MORNING YOUTH GROUP (6<sup>TH</sup>-12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE)

Join Carl Korfmacher, Kim Moran, and Deb Herbers for a fun time of conversation and reading the Bible. A fun group of 6-12<sup>th</sup> 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.

### CONFIRMATION MINISTRY IN 2012

Following a break for the holidays, Confirmation ministry **resumes on Wednesday, January 11**, with our usual schedule from 6:00pm to 7:30pm. Games, music, Bible study, small group, and prayer fill up this important time together. This hour and a half is one important part of growing in faith as a youth at St. John's. Your prayers for our confirmation youth and their leaders are always appreciated.

### SWEET WEDNESDAYS (9<sup>TH</sup>-12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE)

**Wednesday, January 11** starts out the 2012 calendar for our weekly high school gatherings (called Sweet Wednesdays). 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. Once you come, you'll know why we keep coming back each week!

### HIGH SCHOOL SKI TRIP

**Friday, January 20, 2012**, is the date set for St. John's high school youth to hit the slopes. We're teaming up with the youth of St. Paul Catholic Church for a ski trip to Cascade Mountain! With no school that day it's the perfect occasion for an adventure. (Let's hope the weather cooperates this year.) Details are coming soon to your email inbox. Or contact Keith Hennig or Pastor Matt to find out more.