



The EAGLE CALL

Volume 45, Number 12
December, 2013

Worship

Saturday
5:00 pm

Sunday
8:00 am
10:00 am

Radio Broadcast
KRNT 1350 AM
Sunday Mornings
8:30 am

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The Meaning is in the Waiting...

We are impatient people. We want everything fast: our computers, our job promotions, our appointments, even our coffee! And when the month of December rolls around, we are urged to "pick up the pace." In fact, this year we are encouraged to simply skip Thanksgiving Day so that we can get started on this Christmas shopping on Thursday. Why sit around at home? *Tempus fugit!*

There is, however, a place where December is not about doing things twice as fast as usual. As people of faith, we rejoice that December brings us the Season of Advent, and Advent is all about waiting. To apply the last line of a poem by R.S. Thomas to Advent, we could say that Advent's *meaning is in the waiting*. This waiting is not passive but active, a time devoted to pondering God's coming into our lives in the past, present and future. The meaning found in the waiting of Advent is not unlike the meaning a woman finds in the months of pregnancy. It is a necessary time of waiting in which faith deepens as love and gratitude for God's immeasurable grace fill our hearts.

Worship at St. John's this Advent will provide the quiet and the activity, silence and song that faithful waiting requires. And the meaning of it all will be *found in the waiting...*

Worship is at 5 p.m. on Saturdays and 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. on Sundays every week. On Sunday, Dec. 15, the Children's Advent Program will be presented at 9 a.m. in the Sanctuary.



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In the City for Good!
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 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.,
 4:00 p.m. Friday

Next Eagle Call Deadline
December 16 at noon



A Word from Our Pastors

Pastor Rachel Thorson Mithelman

Dear Friends,

I pulled a side chair up close to Kathryn's comfortable rocker in the assisted living apartment to which she had recently moved. A combination of osteoporosis and Parkinson's Disease had forced this former school administrator to sell a beautiful home filled with the treasures of world-wide travel for this compact space, and we both knew that another move – to skilled care – would likely come within the year.

But on this afternoon, we talked and laughed together as December sunlight streamed through the windows. And as was always the case now, Kathryn's body was in constant motion as we visited – her head, torso, arms, and legs all swaying as though to separate melodies.

I opened my home communion kit, set out two wafers and filled two small cups with wine. We began worship by exchanging the apostolic greeting followed by prayer. Then I opened my Bible and said, "This is the Gospel reading for this coming Sunday, Kathryn." And as I announced the reading, an amazing thing happened: Kathryn moved forward slightly in her chair, put her elbows on her knees and her chin in her hands, *and became utterly still as she gave her undivided attention to the Word...*

At least 10 years have passed since that quiet afternoon in Kathryn's apartment, but the memory of her body in constant motion suddenly becoming still as she focused on the Gospel comes to my mind every Advent. Why in Advent? Because that same quiet focus is what we are invited to in this season, even as the voices urging us to shop, purchase and party seem to increase in volume every day. Here at St. John's, Advent worship will begin with the haunting melody of a 16th century French processional which we know as the hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." We will mark the weeks of waiting by lighting special candles, and the first prayer we pray, collecting the themes of the day and season (which is why it was once called "The Collect"), will begin with the same two words each week: "Stir up..."

- *Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come, we will pray on the First Sunday of Advent.*
- *Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son, we will pray the next Sunday.*
- *Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, we will pray on the third Sunday of the season.*
- *Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come, we repeat on the fourth Sunday as we draw near to Christmas.*

The prayers are true cries of the heart for freedom from sin and guilt, for life-transforming grace, for peace and light. They center us and prepare us for the Gospel truth: God has sent us a Savior, Jesus, who remains with us now and will come again in glory!

It is my prayer that God's powerful Word of judgment, hope, and love will be what draws you to the edge of your chairs and quiets your minds and hearts this Advent season. These waiting days are rich in meaning, filled with glimpses of grace. Cherish them. Rejoice in the news that Christ IS Emmanuel – "God with us." Even us.

Peace to you.

Christmas at St. John's

Christmas Eve at St. John's will offer three completely different worship experiences. However, all take place in the beautiful St. John's Sanctuary under a canopy of hundreds of stars and among the lighted Christmas Trees. Each service has unique, specially prepared music and a sharing of the word of God's unlimited love, unconditional forgiveness and boundless grace.

5 p.m. Children's Service

This service is especially created for families with young children and includes a creative dramatic presentation of the Nativity events that world-changing night. We all know the details of the story, but there is no end to what we can uncover in it. Our Kisasa Choristers and Handbells will take part in leading the music, and the story will be re-conceived this year by Director of Youth Ministries Noah Niermann.

8:30 p.m. Mass of the Christ Child

This is a full Lutheran communion liturgy for the Nativity of Our Lord. Pre-service music begins at 8 p.m. and includes Handbells, Brass Quintet and festive Organ carols. The music is accompanied by brass and organ, and the liturgy ends with the a cappella singing of "Silent Night" by the congregation as they lift aloft their lighted candles.

11 p.m. Candlelight Carol Service

This service is constructed chiefly around Christmas Hymns and Carols that at once fill our spirits and proclaim the gospel in poetry and music. Pre-service music by the Adult Handbell Choir, Festival Orchestra and Organ begins at 10:30 p.m. This service ends at midnight with lighted candles and "Silent Night."

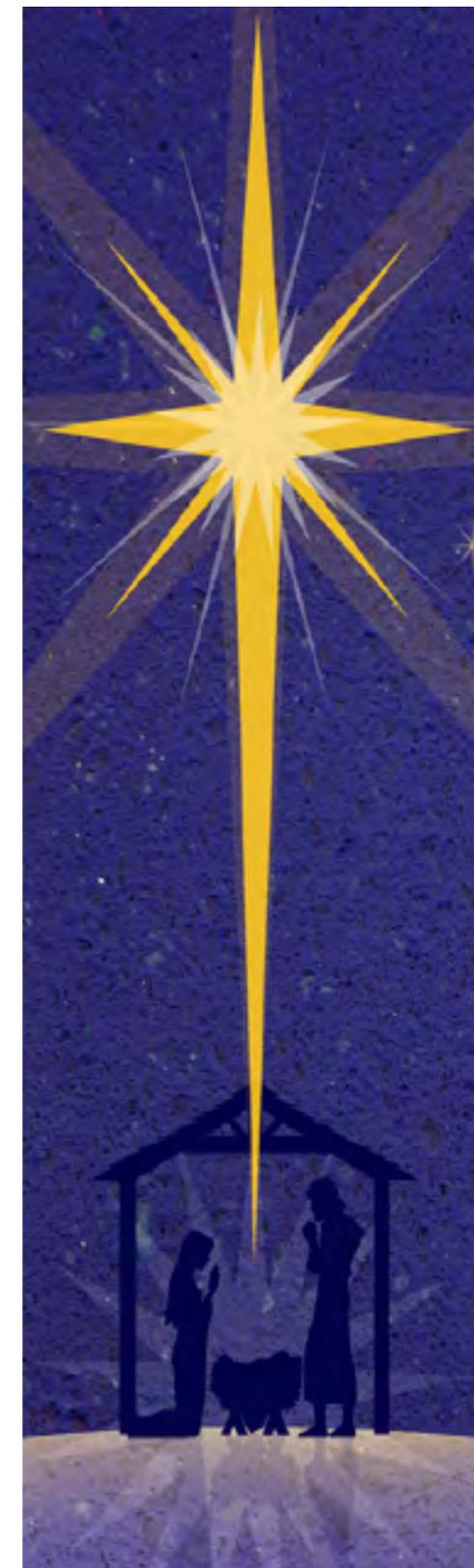
10 a.m. Christmas Day Service

With a sung liturgy completely of Christmas hymns and carols, this Christmas morning service is appropriately simple: word, prayer, praise and sacrament, both spoken and sung.

Joy to the World – the Lord has come!



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 ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THE EAGLE CALL?**
 E-mail businessoffice@stjohnsdsm.org and request the
 eEagle Call. Help us save on the cost of postage, use
 less paper, and see each issue in **FULL COLOR**.



The Arts at St. Johns

Join Special Vocal Choir for 8:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship Service

If you or someone you know would like to sing in a choir at the 8:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service, we need you and want you! The music will be beautiful and uncomplicated and will add much to the service.

You are free to sit with your family during most of the service, and then go to the choir loft when you sing. Singers of all ages are welcome and encouraged to join us, no matter what your singing background or experience. Choral singing provides many benefits: praising God, enhancing worship for the congregation and you, and spending time with our St. John's family.

Two rehearsals are scheduled: Sunday, Dec. 8, and Sunday, Dec. 15, at 11:15 a.m. in the Chapel. To sign up or for more information, contact Beth Ann Edwards (bethann@stjohnsdsm.org).

Kisasa Schedule for December

Kisasa musicians have a very important December schedule as we move through Advent and toward Christmas. If your child, in Grades 3-6, would like to take part in our Advent and Christmas preparations and worship, please contact Beth Ann Edwards (bethann@stjohnsdsm.org).

- **Wednesday, Dec. 4** - Rehearse at usual time (6:30 to 7:30 p.m.)
- **Sunday, Dec. 8** - Sing for 10 a.m. worship (call time is 9:40 a.m.)
- **Wednesday, Dec. 11** - Rehearse at usual time (6:30 to 7:30 p.m.)
- **Sunday, Dec. 15** - Advent program
- **Wednesday, Dec. 18** - Rehearse at usual time, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- **Sunday, Dec. 22** - Ring for 10 a.m. worship with youth handbell choir, followed by a rehearsal for Christmas Eve service (11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.)
- **Tuesday, Dec. 24** - Sing and ring for 5 p.m. Christmas Eve worship (call time is 4:15 p.m.)

Artist of the Month



December's Artist of the Month is the St. John's community! Our Kisasa artists have painted the background for a mural (*photo above*) that will develop and grow through the season of Advent. Between now and Christmas, please add your own touch to the mural. Consider the meaning of Advent, or how you approach Christmas in your household.

Following are a few suggestions, but you are not limited to these ideas. Two Advent symbols are candles and wreaths (or circles). You are free to draw or write directly on the mural, or bring your work and attach it to the background (we might not be able to return it).

- A drawing or piece of artwork
- Scripture passages
- Poems and writings, either original or by another author
- Family memories or traditions
- Photographs

A few art supplies will be available in Weertz Hall, and we can provide whatever you require. This mural will become a tribute to us and our life together at St. John's as we anticipate our celebration of the birth of Christ. Please contact Beth Ann Edwards if you have questions (bethann@stjohnsdsm.org).

Midweek Music Series

Please join us the first three Wednesdays in December at 12:05 p.m. for our Midweek Music Series concerts and lunches. Concerts, which are free and open to the public, are held in the Sanctuary, and lunch (\$6 per person) is available at 12:30 p.m. in Weertz Hall.

- **Dec. 4** - Grand View Choir, Kathryn Duffy, director
- **Dec. 11** - Ed Griffin, tenor, and Francine Griffith, piano

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- **Dec. 18** - *A St. John's Christmas*, featuring the talents of our St. John's musicians
- **Friday, Dec. 27**, brings a special concert. Sue Hudson and children, Tom and Carol, will fill the Sanctuary with virtuoso instrumental pieces that are sure to delight us. This concert begins at 12:05 p.m. and will extend past the usual ending time of 12:30 p.m. No lunch will be served; however, coffee and refreshments will be available after the concert in the Fireside Lounge.

Handbell Workshop

St. John's adult handbell choir hosted five guest handbell choirs on Saturday, Nov. 16, to work with clinician Ed Rollins from Columbia, Mo. St. Mark Lutheran Church (West Des Moines), Windsor Presbyterian Church (Windsor Heights), Concordia Lutheran Church (Cedar Rapids), First Unitarian Church (Des Moines) and Plymouth Congregational Church (Des Moines) spent the day with Ed, working on music and musicianship, learning ringing techniques, and discussing the value of music in worship. All six choirs participated in our 5 p.m. Saturday worship service, which was held in the Sanctuary. A Friday night directors' round-table and clinic also was held as part of the workshop.



Ringers from six handbell choirs prepare music for the 5 pm Saturday worship on November 16



Handbell ringers listen to Ed Rollins, clinician, during the "Ask Ed Anything" session



"Burning Bush" can be found in the alcove located on the 6th Ave. side of St. John's

Busy Season Continues for the Arts at St. John's

The Arts Visioning Team had a full agenda this fall: a new sculpture (*Pictured above*), Midweek Music Series, Artist of the Month, handbell workshop and more!

The ARTS at ST. JOHN'S

The Performing Arts Series gets in full swing after the first of the year. Our upcoming events include Augustana College (Rock Island) concert on Saturday, Feb. 22, and worship Sunday, Feb. 23; Shrove Tuesday celebration with Ballyhoo Foxtrot Orchestra on Tuesday, March 4; Wartburg College Choir concert on Wednesday, March 19; choral workshop and concert with David Cherwien Saturday and Sunday, March 29-30, and more!

The team has opportunities for you to assist. Volunteers are needed to help plan and staff these events. All are free and open to the public, but your financial assistance is greatly appreciated. Donations can be made on-line or in the church office. Please contact Beth Ann Edwards (bethann@stjohnsdsm.org) or Larry Hanson (lhanson@ft.newyorklife.com) if you can assist.

Small Groups

Questions? Contact Darla Stiles, Small Groups Coordinator
243.7691 or darlastiles@stjohnsdsm.org

CALENDAR

Quilting: Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m., Room 308.

Saturday AM Bible Study: will not meet in December.

Zumba: 5 p.m., Mondays, Dec. 2, 9, 16, third-floor Multi-Purpose Room at church.

Mah Jongg: 5 p.m., Monday, Dec. 2, at St. John's in Neumann Hall at church; Monday, Dec. 8, in the reserved room at Smokey Row, 1910 Cottage Grove Ave., Des Moines.

Restaurant Visitation/Christian Involvement: 6 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 3, at Sam & Gabes, Hickman Rd., Des Moines.

WIRED Night Out: 7 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 5, meet in Temple for Performing Arts lobby for a 7:30 p.m. performance of "Dixie's Tupperware Party."

St. John's Social Club: 3:30 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 8, Scottish Rite, Woodland Ave., caroling. Dinner at Court Avenue Brewing Company afterward. Cost per person: \$30 (includes room rate, tax and gratuity). RSVP to Jean and Bob Williams (rwilli1195@aol.com).

Hardanger: 9 a.m., Wednesday, Dec. 11, Neumann Hall; all are welcome. Facilitator: Arlene Field, 964-3363.

EAGLES: 11:45 a.m., Friday, Dec. 13, potluck and game day, Weertz Hall at church.

Photography: 11 a.m., Sunday, Dec. 15, Neumann Hall at church. Theme: A recent photo that turned out better than expected.

Lunch Bunch II: 12:30 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 18.

Recreational Reading: 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 18, Rose Holm Room at church.

Lunch Bunch I: 11:30 a.m., Thursday, Dec. 19.

Scrapbooking: will not meet in December.

Keep up to date with all events by subscribing to our weekly email newsletter (sign up on the homepage of our website) or keep an eye on www.stjohnsdsm.org/news

MORE INFORMATION:

Quilting continues to meet at 9:30 a.m. Tuesdays in Room 308 at church. If interested, contact Dorothy Parry (255-6049).

Saturday AM Bible Study will not meet in December.

Mah Jongg will meet at 6 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 2, in Neumann Hall at St. John's, and Monday, Dec. 9, in the reserved room at Smokey Row, 1910 Cottage Grove Ave., Des Moines.

Zumba will meet at 5 p.m. on Mondays, Dec. 2, 9 and 16 in the Multi-Purpose Room on third floor at church. Kelli is a certified Zumba teacher and is looking forward to continuing at St. John's. This class is open to all. It

costs only \$5 per class. You may sign in when you attend and pay at the end of the session on Dec. 16. Please plan to join us for any or all of the classes.

Restaurant Visitation/Christian Involvement will meet at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 3, at Sam & Gabes on Hickman Rd., Des Moines.

St. John's Social Club will meet at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 8, at Scottish Rite on Woodland Ave. in Des Moines to go caroling. Following, the group will enjoy dinner at Court Avenue Brewing Company. Cost per person is \$30 (includes room rate, tax and gratuity). Join us for a fun afternoon getting into the holiday spirit. Please respond to Jean and Bob Williams (rwilli1195@aol.com).

EAGLES is scheduled to meet at 11:45 on Friday, Dec. 13, in Weertz Fellowship Hall for a potluck and game day.

Photography will meet at 11 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 15, in Neumann Hall at church. Theme: Bring a recent photo that turned out better than expected.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED DMARC WAREHOUSE, DES MOINES

The Des Moines Area Religious Council needs help in our Food Pantry Network Warehouse. This is our busiest time of the year for MovetheFood, between the holidays of November and December. Duties include: unloading food as it is donated, counting, sorting, boxing food for the 13 partner food pantries. Are you able to help for a couple hours, one day a week at our 3816 36th Street warehouse? Contact the DMARC Food Pantry Warehouse Manager Daniel Beck at: 515-277-6969.

Prepare for Worship

Sunday, December 1, 2013 First Sunday of Advent

The new church year begins with a wake-up call: Christ is coming soon! In today's readings both Paul and Jesus challenge us to wake from sleep, for we know neither the day nor hour of the Lord's coming. Isaiah proclaims the day when God will gather all people on the holy mountain and there will be no more war or suffering. Though we vigilantly watch for the promised day of salvation, we wait for what we already have: Christ comes among us this day as the word and meal that strengthens our faith in the promises of God.

The readings are Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14; and Matthew 24:36-44. The "Lighting of Advent Wreath" rite will use different stanzas of hymn ELW 257, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" each week. The other hymns for Advent 1 will be ELW 436, "Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying," and ELW 259, "Fling Wide the Door." During offering at 10 am Cathedral Choir will sing "People, Look East," arranged by William Schoenfeld for offering, and "Peace," by Timothy P. Schulz during communion. Laying on of hands and anointing with oil for healing will be offered throughout the season as well.

Sunday, December 8, 2013 Second Sunday of Advent

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases, we turn toward the light of Christ's coming. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

The readings will be Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Romans 15:4-13; and Matthew 3:1-12.

The hymns will be ELW 249, "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry," and ELW 244, "Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers." For offering the Cathedral Choir, Kisasa Choristers, and Chamber Orchestra will present Carolyn Jennings' classic favorite "Climb to the Top of the Highest Mountain." During communion the Cathedral Choir will sing "Prepare the Royal Highway," by Hal H. Hopson.

Sunday, December 15, 2013 Third Sunday of Advent

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom. Jesus points to signs of God's reign: the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are

cleansed, the deaf hear. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

The readings are Isaiah 35:1-10, Psalm 146:5-10, James 5:7-10, and Matthew 11:2-11. The hymns will be ELW 254, "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus," ELW 262, "Wait for the Lord," and ELW 266, "All Earth Is Hopeful." Cathedral Choir will sing "Go and Tell John," by Lloyd Pfautsch as a gospel motet and "He Comes to Us as One Unknown," arranged by John Ferguson during communion.

Sunday, December 22, 2013 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation of the one names Emmanuel, God-with-us. During this Advent season each Sunday we will have prayed "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn bases on ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday in Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

The readings are Isaiah 7:10-16, Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19, Romans 1:1-7, and Matthew 1:18-25. The hymns will include ELW 245, "Creator of the Stars of Night," and ELW 260, "The King Shall Come." For offering the Kisasa and Youth Handbell Choirs will ring, and during communion Cathedral Choir will sing "As Joseph was a-walking," a folk carol set by Herbert Grieb.

Sunday, December 29, 2013 First Sunday of Christmas

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the "holy innocents" of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

The readings are Isaiah 63:7-9, Psalm 148, Hebrews 2:10-18, and Matthew 2:13-23. The hymns will be ELW 269, "Once in Royal David's City," ELW 286, "Your Little Ones, Dear Lord," ELW 487, "What Feast of Love," and ELW 273, "All My Heart Again Rejoices," and ELW 299, "Cold December Flies Away." During the offering Cathedral Choir will sing "That Boy Child of Mary," and "All My Heart Again Rejoices" during communion.

Children's Ministry

The Advent of Our King

All are invited to attend the Children's Advent Program on Sunday, Dec 15, at 9 a.m. in the Sanctuary. We get ready for Jesus through this special celebratory event. The children have been learning the meaning of Advent, the season of hopeful waiting.



In Advent, as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth, we also watch for His second coming. We are reminded that despite the darkness that so often surrounds us, there is a promise of light. With joyful anticipation, we invite you to be a part of this special time as we lift up our voices in his name.

A reception will follow the Advent Program and 10 a.m. service in Fireside Lounge. We will host a hot chocolate bar, with all of the fixings, in celebration of this joyous event. We hope you will join us!

If you wish to make a donation to the hot chocolate bar, we will be collecting instant hot chocolate packets or canisters, candy canes, marshmallows, candy sprinkles, whipping cream and plastic spoons. Donations can be given to Children's Ministries Director Alicia Karwal. Thank you in advance for any contributions!

Sunday School Schedule

Sunday, Dec. 1

- **3 year olds/Preschool/Kindergarten:** *Naaman is Healed*, 2 Kings 5:1-19;
- Advent Program Rehearsal in Room 7 for last portion of class time
- **1st-6th grades:** Advent Program Rehearsal in Room 307

Sunday, Dec. 8

- **3 year olds/Preschool/Kindergarten:** *Queen Esther*, Esther 2:5-18; 3:1-6; 8:1-17;
- Advent Program Rehearsal in Room 7 for last portion of class time
- **1st-6th grades:** Advent Program Rehearsal in Room 307

Saturday, Dec. 14

- **1st-6th grades:** Advent Program Dress Rehearsal in the sanctuary from 9:00-11:00 AM

Sunday, Dec. 15

- **All Sunday School Classes:** Warm-up in the chapel at 8:15 AM
- Children's Advent Program at 9:00 AM in the sanctuary
- Children's Advent Program Reception following the 10:00 AM service in Fireside Lounge

Sunday, Dec. 22, and Sunday, Dec. 29

- NO SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES!

Sunday School classes will resume on Jan. 5, 2014. Classes will be held from 8:45 to 9:45 a.m. in their normal locations: 3 year olds in Room 5, preschoolers in Room 6, kindergarteners in Room 7, 1st-6th graders will begin in the Chapel and then move to their classrooms on the second floor.

Youth Ministry

*So, friends, every day
do something that won't compute.
Love the Lord. Love the world.
Work for nothing.
Take all that you have and be poor.
Love someone who does not deserve it.*

Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front
by Wendell Berry

Dear Friends,

This past weekend, Nov. 16-17, marked the end of my first two months here at St. John's. I spent the anniversary weekend at Drake Stadium, in the shadow of a giant cardboard replica of a Legoman, with nine of our high school youth – Aidan, Connor, Daniel, Olivia, Liz, Kat, Sara, Elizabeth and Ellen – and about 1,000 other Iowans. The event was Reggie's Sleepout, and the goal was to raise money, awareness and support for homeless youth who have aged out of the foster care system. I would not have wanted to be anywhere else. We raised somewhere over \$450 and stayed mostly dry when the heavens opened at 3:00 in the morning.

As my weeks here at St. John's begin turning into months, I keep returning to the idea of church as gift. At our very core, we are a part of this church to live, share and receive the gift of God's love that is incarnated in Christ. That is Christ both in a manger and on a cross, and this is what grounds us. In turn, St. John's, on a day-to-day basis, only exists because of the gifts that we, the Body of Christ, share. I am daily awed by the generosity I see here – generosity that shows itself in kindness, volunteerism, financial support, artistic expression, food and ways too numerous to count. We are asked by Wendell Berry and Jesus, too, to

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Photos from Reggie's Sleepout

take all that we have and be poor. This doesn't make sense to our ears. But there is richness here in the mixed up, upside-down, backwards, non-computing mischief of the Gospel that I think we only get to by gift. I see it here in the church, and I am thankful.

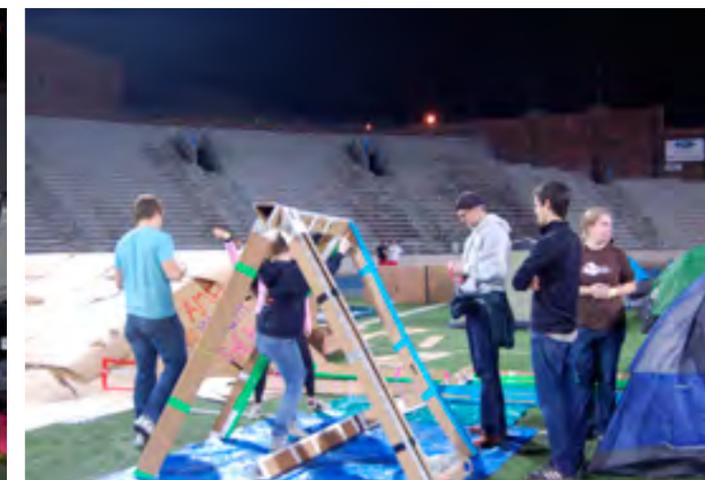
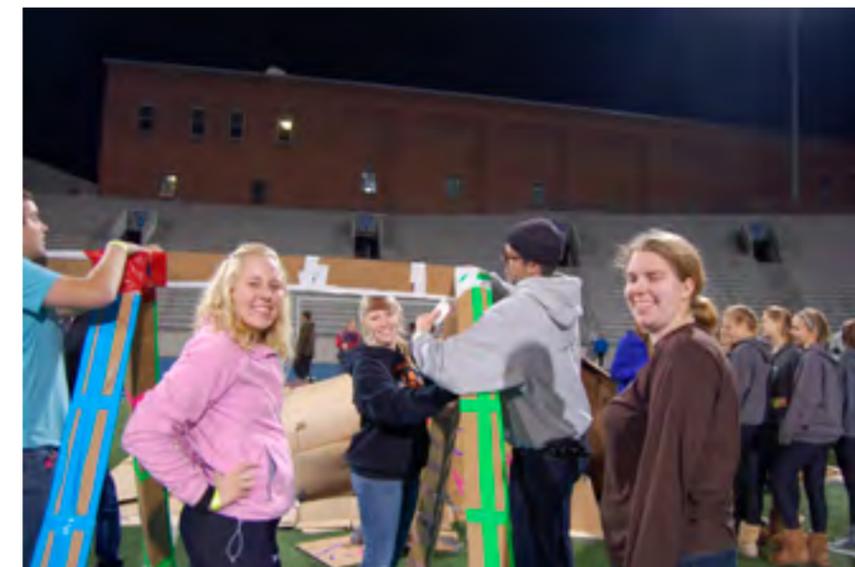
Thank you for the opportunity to talk about and live faith with your sons and daughters. It is a gift!

Blessings during this holiday season,

Noah Niermann,
Director of Youth Ministries

Mark Your Calendar:

Friday, Feb. 28, 2014: Sixth Annual Youth Fund-raising Auction and Dinner at Forté!



Hospitality & Outreach



Finding God in All Things

The title above reflects a core aspect of Ingation spirituality, referring to St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, commonly called the Jesuits.

This past month I turned the big 6-0. My reaction was “how on earth did this happen?” How did my two children turn into capable grown-ups! One is opening her own veterinarian practice in Ohio (don't only adults do that?). My son and his wife are presenting me with my first grandchild come January, and both are involved in corporate endeavors in Chicago.

Just last week I was attending her school plays and his sporting events. Wasn't I?

Within the past month, both “children” moved to new residences. After 22 years in a house, I downsized to a condo. And, my daughter was married. All of this is more activity than I plan to have within a year, let alone a month. As all this was coming upon me, I found myself facing it with anticipation – and also some fear.

I am a creature of habit. Familiar people, places and routine schedules help provide my comfort zone. At least, that's what I told myself. Now that I'm at the other end of these events and have had time to review and reflect, I realize my real comfort zone is constantly with me, inside me, and the exterior trappings are only a façade.

The journey to this point in my life, and I'm guessing yours also, has been a combination of the sublime and ridiculous, at times happy, other times dismal. I've experienced euphoric highs (all natural!) and grief so paralyzing I wasn't sure I would survive. Parts of the path were relatively smooth and others so rocky, steep or treacherous that I only made it because Someone was supporting me the entire time.

It's not to say that along my life I haven't realized my reliance on God; I am aware every minute, every day. I am a pray-er. I pray for people with health issues and family issues. I ask God's protection, guidance and strength for friends and family.

I pray for our world, our country, for peace and reconciliation, for an end to hatred and violence. So, while I rely on God, I fall short when determining where God is present in the here and now.

I am obtuse at times. What I want to learn, what I want to become an automatic part of me, is to be so present in the moment that I know and feel God's contact at that time. How much wiser, how much more connected I would be if I could see God's touch at the time it was happening; it would really save time, as well as wear and tear on my soul!

But God is patient with me, and with all who believe, and provides countless opportunities to experience the comfort, forgiveness and joy given to those residing within the Body of Christ. We are given multiple chances every day. I pray for you, and for me, that we will be open to these opportunities, that we will be aware as they occur. I pray we are all conscious enough that we see and feel the moments God touches us.

We needn't wait. *I believe we shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.*

Katie Tippins, Hospitality & Outreach Coordinator

Women of the ELCA

The Women of the ELCA have New Directions, a shelter for women and children, as their outreach project for December. The congregation also is invited to participate by contributing Christmas gifts that mothers and children can give to each other. Some suggestions for gifts are scarves, gloves, mittens, pajamas, bath towels, body lotion, Play Dough, crayons, coloring and activity books, educational toys, and Walmart or grocery gift cards.



The mothers and their children, who are between 2-months- and 14-years-old (the majority are ages 4 to 9), will be given the opportunity to choose a gift and wrap it. We need donations by Saturday, Dec. 14, so they will have adequate time to wrap the gifts before Christmas. Look for the marked boxes by Neumann Hall and near the office reception area. Also, we wish to thank all who contributed to Lutheran Services of Iowa in November.

December Meetings

- **Lois Group** will meet at the church Wednesday, Dec. 4, at noon and attend Midweek Music and have lunch together (\$6 for lunch) in Weertz Hall. The music that day is the Grand View College choir.
- **Sarah Group** will meet Thursday, Dec. 5, at 10 a.m., at the home of Jean Williams, 314 42nd Street in Des Moines. Bring cookies for the shut-in cookie trays.

Unwanted Christmas Lights

WELCA is again collecting unwanted Christmas lights for our Good Samaritan Fund. There is a collection bin in the office area where you may leave them. Also, please save your pull tabs for the same fund.

In the City (and World) for Good!

Isn't it strange how, even among the people of God, we clutch people rather than love them? Love knows how to take a basin and a towel, how to stoop and meet the needs of the disciples, how to meet the needs of the world. A person will never be at home in the Christian church until he or she learns how to be at home with a basin and a towel.

...from *Seized By the Power of a Great Affection* by N. Gordon Cosby

How to “be at home” at St. John's this (and nearly every) month...

Two of the best places to make a financial contribution in support of relief efforts in the Philippines are the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, www.elca.org and Lutheran World Relief, www.lwr.org. If you would like to make a gift to either organization through St. John's, please clearly mark your contribution, and we will send it on as soon as possible... Perhaps a donation could be made in lieu of purchasing a present for the one “who has everything.” (And isn't that all of us?)

Our “angel tree,” an opportunity to provide Christmas gifts for three families without permanent homes and approximately 100 of the guests who eat at the Connection Café will be in the Narthex by early December. Some of the requests are for gift cards, but there are also requests for clothes and toys. If an item requested is beyond your budget, ask a friend or another family to share it with you!

We will be serving the evening meal on Dec. 18 and Dec. 19 at Central Iowa Shelter and Services, a Wednesday and Thursday night this month. If you are interested in being involved in this ministry, or if you haven't seen the new shelter on Mulberry Street, you are very welcome to join. A lot of St. John's folks are experienced with the supper routine and would be glad to help out a first-timer.

The Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) is moving the office and food pantry warehouse to the old Central Iowa Shelter building around the first of the year. Renovations are in progress to the building, which will provide a 6000 square-foot warehouse for food, along with a loading dock for large trucks, etc. The DMARC offices will be on the west end of the building. The combined goal for all DMARC congregations giving to this effort is \$260,000. Please help make sure St. John's does its part – and more!

Finally, St. John's will host an ecumenical service of worship in support of immigration reform on Tuesday, Dec. 10, at 7 p.m. More details will be shared in the weekly announcements.

Thank you for all of the ways you are “in the city (and the world) for good!” Your faithful service to one another as well as your neighbor in need is a powerful testimony to others. God bless you!

News from the Garden

At the End of a Third Season

It has been my pleasure to serve at the St. John's Faith Garden at the Speirs, both as coordinator and one of the 16 gardeners.

Thank you to all the members of the congregation who have been so supportive of us. It has been the combination of gardeners, communicators, financial supporters, and those who prayed that we were able to (working through the heat and drought) donate nearly 600 pounds of fresh produce to the Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) Food Pantries.

Our only goal is to provide nutritious food for those in our community who wouldn't be able to buy fresh vegetables for their families.

One in five children in our area experience food insecurity, meaning they don't know where their next meal is coming from. The fresh produce that many congregations and individuals in our area donate to DMARC and other agencies significantly helps to alleviate childhood hunger.

Thank you all for your part in providing this basic human need.

“Peace will never be attained as long as people are hungry,” said Norman Borlaug, Nobel Peace Prize recipient (for his work in agriculture) and originator of the World Food Prize.

If you yearn for peace, work to feed the hungry. St. John's is doing this with the Speirs' generous gift of their land as well as everyone's work in and donations for the Faith Garden!

Diana Sickles, Garden Coordinator

DID YOU KNOW?

St. John's offers Wi-Fi from Weertz to DDI. Just look for the STJOHNS wireless network and use 'inthecity' for the passcode.



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Serving at Central Iowa Shelter & Services

On the 18th and 19th of each month St. John's prepares and serves meals at the shelter.

If you would like to help prepare, serve or donate to this wonderful ministry located in the heart of downtown Des Moines, please call 243.7691 or e-mail scottl@stjohnsdsm.org.



NEXT EAGLE CALL DEADLINE

The deadline for all Eagle Call information is **Monday, December 16**. Please send information or articles in digital format to Scott LaBlanc, scottl@stjohnsdsm.org. If you cannot send it by e-mail, drop it off at the church office.
Thank you!