



DES MOINES, IOWA

Celebrating
150 years
1865-2015

in the city for good

the Eagle Call

Volume 47, Number 01 | January 2015

Celebrating 2014!



Worship

Saturday

5:00 pm

Sunday

8:00 am

10:00 am

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A Word from Our Pastors

By Pastor Bob Speirs



As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. - Colossians 3:12-15

The old adage seems to be true: Time does fly when you're having a good time. So here we are again, at the beginning of a new year, with all the hope and possibilities that 2015 will bring. I'm excited about the opportunities the New Year will bring – some old, many new – as we live out our call together to be witnesses to Jesus Christ and continue to share the good news of the Gospel with our neighbors.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who are active participants in this faith community we call St. John's. I'm grateful for your grace, enthusiasm and faithfulness to the mission and ministry to which we are called. It is my privilege and joy to be partners in the Gospel with you all, and I am also appreciative of your prayers, friendship and support in our work together.

Now I would also like to confess that I have never been the person who makes a lot of specific New Year's resolutions, simply because I realize I lack the necessary discipline to keep many of them. That being said, I feel strongly about the counsel of the Apostle Paul in the passage above from Colossians 3, because it reminds me that as a person who has been claimed by Christ in my baptism, I have been called – we have been called – to live a life worthy of such a relationship. So maybe I do have a resolution to make this year after all, and in years to follow, to live a life of love, compassion, kindness and forgiveness, and to remember, as one writer has stated, "that Christian love is shaped by personal humility, by vulnerability to the community, by forgiveness." I wish you all a happy and blessed New Year. Amen.

I would also like to take this occasion to share with you the:

2015 schedule for Winter / Spring Sunday Adult Forum classes 9 to 10 a.m. - Neumann Hospitality Center

Jan. 11 - Dr. Ken Jones, professor of religion at Grand View University, will offer us a three-part study of "The Gospel according to John."

Jan. 18 - Dr. Ken Jones, "The Gospel according to John"

Jan. 25 - Dr. Ken Jones, "The Gospel according to John"

Feb. 1 - Congregational Meeting (no forum)

Feb. 8 - Dr. Mark Mattes Professor of Religion Grand View University "Early Church History"; Mark will lead us in a three part series focusing on the Early Church Fathers, and their role in the development of the Church, and how their theology and worship practices have influenced our understanding of faith and being the church in the 21st century.

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Feb. 15 - Dr. Mark Mattes "Early Church History"

Feb. 22 - Dr. Mark Mattes "Early Church History"

Mar. 1 - Dr John Lyden Liberal Arts Core Director Grand View University; John will offer a two part series on Religion and the Media and will outline a method for critical assessment of popular culture through examples of popular films.

Mar. 8 - Professor John Lyden "Religion and Media"

Mar. 15 - Spring Break (no forum)

Mar. 22 - Jim and Deb Blume "Celebrating 150 years - A History of St. John's"

Mar. 29 - Palm Sunday "Coffee with the Council"

Apr. 5 - Easter (no forum)

Apr. 12 - Pastor Diana Sickles "Hope for the Hungry" Diana will show a documentary that has been produced by the Hope for the Hungry Organization that will focus on the continuing issue of hunger and how the Hope for the Hungry organization is working to alleviate this issue.

Apr. 19 - T.B.A.

Apr. 26 - Pastor Gregory Nelson-Davis "Exploring our Lutheran Liturgy"

May 3 - Pastor Gregory Nelson-Davis "Exploring our Lutheran Liturgy"

May 10 - Pastor Gemechisa Mosa "A History of the Lutheran Church in Ethiopia" †

Prayer Shawl Exhibit

by Beth Ann Edwards

The March Artist of the Month display, as part of the 150th Anniversary celebration, will feature prayer shawls made by our St. John's community. Prayer shawls are created by individuals, blessed by the pastors, and given to those who are grieving or experiencing difficulty in life. Over 18 people have volunteered to knit or crochet a prayer shawl for this project. Plenty of kits are still available, and there's still more than enough time to knit during those long winter nights and Sunday afternoon football games.

Share your prayer shawl stories If you, a friend, or a family member have a story about receiving a prayer shawl, and would like to share it, please contact Beth Ann Edwards (bethann@stjohnsdsm.org).



We are a caring community, and prayer shawl ministry is held up as one example of how we take care of each other.

Get-together Sunday, February 15, after 10:00 worship Knitters and crocheters, please join us on Sunday, February 8, in the Fireside Lounge, after the 10 am worship service, and we can have a little knitting party. Bring your yarn, and we can all knit together! †

In The City (And The World!) for Good...

by Pastor Rachel Thorson Mithelman

In the struggle to become Christ's Body, we have one weapon and one alone: Love. Any other weapon betrays the cause. We are not allowed demanding, controlling power. We are not given the power to fix things. No violence, no hatred. Just love. N. Gordon Cosby

Thank you for using the "weapon of love" to make Christ's love known to so many in our community and around the world!

- **Thank you for contributing to a happier Christmas** for individuals and families who eat at the Connection Café or participate in Family Promise (formerly the Interfaith Hospitality Network). Your gifts are "weapons of love," making clear that God's love is for all! Thanks, also, for providing a generous amount of winter hats, mittens, scarves and gloves to the Mitten Tree. They will be shared by the Des Moines Public Schools system and other agencies!
- **Thank you for tending to our financial commitment** to the Connection Café. Changes are in store for the Café this spring when we must vacate our current serving site. And our goal of \$10,000 per year in support, which helps fund the Café Coordinator's position, is crucial to the future of this ministry. The Café serves a free noon lunch five days per week thanks to the founding congregations and hundreds of volunteers from the community.
- **Thank you for your faithfulness to the meal ministry** at Central Iowa Shelter and Services (CISS) on the 18th and 19th of every month. Now that the weather is colder, the dinner crowd at CISS numbers 250 to 300 people each night! Sign up to help!
- **Have you ever wondered how to best advocate for those who are hungry in our community and around the world?** Join **Bread for the World**, a Christian advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C., and led by the Rev. David Beckman, an ELCA pastor. **Bread** focuses on ending hunger through just policies and practices. The website is www.bread.org. Excellent reading, amazing statistics and opportunities to DO something about hunger in our world!
- **Survivors of domestic violence** meet here at St. John's, the second Thursday of the month, for support and conversation. The group is led by staff from Children and Families of Iowa. These strong women need allies and friends to join them for the gathering. Training is available. Contact Pastor Mithelman for more information.
- **11 children from our Mramba Children's Club took their exams for secondary school in November – and 10 passed the exams!!** (The 11th child will get tutoring to retake the test!) Thank you for your ongoing support of the children of Mramba. You are making an enormous difference in their lives with the "weapon of love!" †

Prepare for Worship

by Larry Christensen

Sunday, Jan. 4 Epiphany of Our Lord

Epiphany means "manifestation." On this day we celebrate the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles – that is, to all nations. Some Christian traditions celebrate three great epiphanies on this day: The magi's adoration of the Christ child, Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River, and his first miracle in which he changes water into wine. The word and sacraments are for us the great epiphany of God's grace and mercy. We go forth to witness to the light that shines brightly in our midst.

The readings are Isaiah 60:1-6, Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14, Ephesians 1:3-14 and Matthew 2:1-12. The hymns will be ELW 665, "Rise, Shine, You People!" ELW 308, "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!" and ELW 302, "As with Gladness Men of Old." During offering at 10 a.m. the Cathedral Choir and soloists will sing *Three Excerpts from Christus* by Felix Mendelssohn, including the soprano recitative "When Jesus, our Lord, was born..." sung by Maddy Wiegers. The trio Paul Stageberg, Joel Gettys and Alex Redding will sing "Say, Where is he born, the king of Judea?" and the chorus, "There Shall a Star from Jacob Come Forth."

Sunday, Jan. 11 Baptism of Our Lord – Lectionary 1

Our re-creation in baptism is an image of the Genesis creation, where the Spirit/wind moved over the waters. Both Mark's gospel and the story in Acts make clear that it is the Spirit's movement that distinguishes Jesus' baptism from John's. The Spirit has come upon us as upon Jesus and the Ephesians, calling us God's beloved children and setting us on Jesus' mission to re-create the world in God's vision of justice and peace.

The readings are Genesis 1:1-5, Psalm 29, Acts 19:1-7 and Mark 1:4-11. The hymns are ELW 455, "Crashing Waters at Creation," ELW 673, "God, Whose Almighty Word," and ELW 412, "Come, Join the Dance of Trinity." At 10 a.m. the Adult Handbell Choir will play for offering, and, for communion, Cathedral Choir will sing "As Jesus Walked into the Stream," by Susan Borwick.

Sunday, Jan. 18 Second Sunday after Epiphany – Lectionary 2

All baptized have a calling in God's world. God calls not just the clergy but also the youngest child, like Samuel. The story in Mark's gospel of the calling of Nathanael plays with the idea of place. Nathanael initially dismisses Jesus because he comes from Nazareth. But where we come from isn't important; it's where – or rather – to whom we come.

The readings are 1 Samuel 3:1-20, Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and John 1:43-51. The hymns will be ELW 611, "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say," ELW 574, "Here I Am, Lord," and ELW 809, "Send Me, Lord." At 10 a.m. the offering selection will be by the Kisasa Choristers, and Cathedral Choir will sing "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me" in an arrangement by Alice Parker.

Sunday, Jan. 25 Third Sunday after Epiphany – Lectionary 3

Stories of the call to discipleship continue as the time after Epiphany plays out the implications of our baptismal calling to show Christ to the world. Jesus begins proclaiming the good news and calling people to repentance right after John the Baptist is arrested for preaching in a similar way. Knowing that John was later executed, we see at the very outset the cost of discipleship. Still, the two sets of fisherman brothers leave everything they have known and worked for all their lives to follow Jesus and fish for people.

The readings are Jonah 3:1-5, 10, Psalm 62:5-12, 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 and Mark 1:14-20. The hymns will be ELW 798, "Will You Come and Follow Me," ELW 817, "You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore," and ELW 815, "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light." At the 10 a.m. service Cathedral Choir will sing "My Life Flows on in Endless Song" in an arrangement Larry Christensen wrote for his son Erik's ordination. The Youth Handbells will ring during communion. †

Creating in Community

by Noah Niermann, Beth Ann Edwards and Darla Stiles

Starting this winter and continuing on into the spring and summer, St. John's is excited to offer new opportunities to strengthen our life together as a community. At the back of the Sanctuary and in your bulletin, look for a list of programs, classes and activities scheduled for the months ahead. You will find them all under the name, Creating in Community.

Together we will explore the fine arts, practical arts and everything in between. Some of these programs may only last for an afternoon, and others will meet more regularly over a series of weeks. People of all ages are invited and encouraged to participate. Sign-up sheets will be located at the rear of the Sanctuary and online. Also, look for updates regularly as programs may be added at any time.

Finally, some of you will likely recognize the above name. We were inspired by the Creating in Community events that took place on Saturday mornings in years past, and we are excited to bring these events back into our life together with a different look and structure. For those of you who remember the old model, we hope you're excited, too! This is a collaborative effort between The Arts at St. Johns, Youth Ministry and Small Groups. Please talk to staff members Noah Niermann, Beth Ann Edwards or Darla Stiles if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you at our first Creating in Community event! †

National Mentoring Month

Article provided by Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI)

January is National Mentoring Month, a time to celebrate mentors and the positive effect they can have on young lives. LSI is blessed to have great volunteer mentors from the community who are investing their time in the children and youth at our Beloit and Bremwood campuses. Thank you to these dedicated individuals! If you are interested in becoming a mentor, visit www.LSIowa.org/volunteer. Or, find a mentoring program in your local area. All it takes is your time, friendship and sharing yourself and your interests to make a difference as a youth mentor!

LSI is proud to be an affiliated social ministry organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Learn more at www.LSIowa.org and www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

"Now I feel like I'll get a lot out of my life."

Chelsea was 15 years old the first time she ran away from home.

"I had some troubles where I was living, and I didn't think it was good for me to live there," she said.

She slept on a relative's friend's couch for two months, ran away again and wound up in court.

"They took me to a psychiatric ward because I told them I wanted to commit suicide," she said quietly. "Then I went to shelter for two months, and then I came to Bremwood."

LSI's Bremwood Residential Treatment Center in Waverly serves youth ages 12 – 18. Many, though not all, of the youth there have experienced trauma from past abuse or neglect. During her time at Bremwood, Chelsea learned new skills to cope with challenges and better ways to identify and communicate her emotions. One of Chelsea's most meaningful Bremwood experiences was her friendship with her mentor.

"She came once a week, and we got ice cream or would go for walks," she said. "We went hiking, and we would cook together. I just needed time with someone who wasn't so involved in my treatment so I could talk to her and see what she thought."

Chelsea also started to work on coping with family challenges. LSI's family-focused approach to care encourages families to be involved as much as possible and works with teens who do not have consistent family involvement to find other solutions for permanency and stability in their lives.

"I first thought this was a waste of my time," Chelsea said. "I didn't want to be here or do what they

wanted me to do. When my family came into my treatment and started being involved, I felt better."

Chelsea recently graduated from Bremwood and is living with family members. Her dream is to graduate high school, attend college and then enter the medical field and eventually become a sonogram technician.

"When I first got here, I didn't see myself graduating or even turning 18," she said. "I never thought I'd get anywhere in life, but now I feel like I'll get a lot out of my life. I want to go to college and know that I have a stable home." †



Quilting News

by Mary Liechty

The December Quilting group was small, but MIGHTY. We accomplished quite a bit and had a lot of fun. We spent our morning "sandwiching" quilts, packaging quilt squares and even managed to tie a few. Thanks to all in attendance and those who dropped off completed quilt tops and quilts. A big thank you to the young man who stayed around after Advent rehearsal to help put packages together. We couldn't have moved all the equipment without you! We realize December was a busy month and appreciate all who took time out of their schedules to come relax and quilt with us.

As of last count, we have approximately 73 quilt packages ready to go for January, with lots of squares cut to make more packages. We have five completed quilts, 16 more to be tied, and probably another dozen to be sandwiched and tied. We need to thank Two River Chapter #31170 of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. With their support we were able to purchase six rolls of batting, which should almost be enough for us to complete the quilts we have packaged.

Our next scheduled quilting bee is Saturday, Jan. 10, from 9 a.m. to noon in Weertz Fellowship Hall. We will be ready for all of you.

Also, **in LATE January we will have a table set up in Fireside Lounge on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings.** Those of you who would like to sew quilt tops can stop by and pick up a package (or two or three or four). We need a few who are willing to sew bindings once the quilts are sandwiched. It's fairly easy to do and can be done at home. **You need no prior sewing ability.** Join the fun. If you need more information, contact Mary Liechty (326-2737). †

Small Groups

by Darla Stiles

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

Mah Jongg: Mondays, Jan. 5, 12, 19 and 26, 6 p.m., St. John's.

Restaurant Visitation/Christian Involvement: Tuesday, Jan. 6, 6 p.m. (location to be announced).

Hardanger: Will not meet in January but will resume in February (potluck and planning).

EAGLES: Friday, Jan. 9, noon, Neumann Hospitality Center, St. John's.

Lunch Bunch I: Thursday, Jan. 15, 11: 30 a.m.

Photography: Sunday, Jan. 18, following 10 a.m. service, Neumann Hospitality Center, St. John's.

Lunch Bunch II: Wednesday, Jan. 21, 12: 30 a.m.

WIRED Book Discussion: Thursday, Jan. 22, 6 p.m., Jacque Warming's house.

Scrapbooking: Saturday, Jan. 24, between 9: 30 a.m. and 2 p.m., Room 8, St. John's.

Recreational Reading: Wednesday, Jan. 28, 4: 30 p.m., Rose Holm Room, St. John's.

Yoga: Will resume after the holidays.

St. John's Social Club: Planning event (location and date to be announced).

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

WIRED Book Discussion will gather Thursday, Jan. 22, at 6 p.m. at the home of Jacque Warming. The book the group will discuss is *The Invention of Wings*, by Sue Monk Kidd. Bring an hors d'oeuvre if you have time to make or buy one. RSVP to Jacque (jrwarming@msn.com).

Lunch Bunch II will meet Wednesday, Jan. 21, at 12: 30 a.m. If you are interested in joining this group, contact Janet Figg (515-279-6326).

Recreational Reading will meet Wednesday, Jan. 28, at 4: 30 p.m. in Rose Holm Room at St. John's. The book the group will discuss is *Book of Ages: The Life and Opinions of Jane Franklin*, by Jill Lepore.

Scrapbooking will meet Saturday, Jan. 24, between 9: 30 a.m. and 2 p.m. in Room 8 at St. John's to work on individual scrapbooking projects or cards. All are welcome.

St. John's Social Club will meet sometime in January to plan the 2015's activities. Watch announcements and your e-mail box for date and location of the next gathering. Start thinking of interesting places to go and things to do in 2015, so that you will be ready to offer suggestions when we next meet.

Yoga will resume after the holidays. Watch announcements for more details.

Hardanger will NOT meet in January but will resume on Tuesday, Feb. 10. †

150th Anniversary News

by LaDonna Russell

Nexus Reunion April 18-19

In conjunction with the 150th Anniversary celebration, the weekend of April 18-19 has been chosen for a reunion of all former members of Nexus Choir, the high school choir that served high school students at St. John's and toured nationally and internationally. Reunion attendees will have the opportunity to reconnect as well as make music together again. An anthem, written by Stacey V. Gibbs, has been commissioned for this celebration and will be premiered during worship April 19.

Many former Nexus members have fond memories of time shared with fellow singers, and the reunion promises a way for old friends to catch up with each other. The planning team is moving forward with the weekend's itinerary and would love your input. Please contact Larry Christensen (larryc@stjohnsdsm.org) or LaDonna Russell (russelllks@aol.com) with your thoughts, ideas and willingness to help plan the reunion weekend. †

More information

Quilting continues to meet Tuesdays at 9: 30 a.m. in Room 308 at St. John's.

Mah Jongg will meet Mondays, Jan. 5, 12, 19 and 26 at 6 p.m. in Neumann Hospitality Center at St. John's. If you can attend, contact Darla Stiles (darlastiles@stjohnsdsm.org).

EAGLES will meet Friday, Jan. 9, at noon in Neumann Hospitality Center at St. John's for a potluck and planning session. Please e-mail Darla Stiles (darlastiles@stjohnsdsm.org) or call her (243-7691) or put in her mailbox at St. John's any ideas you may have for places to go or activities to do this year.

Lunch Bunch I meets Thursday, Jan. 15, at 11: 30 a.m. If anyone is interested in joining this group, please call Barb Hyler (515-401-5721). New members are most welcome!

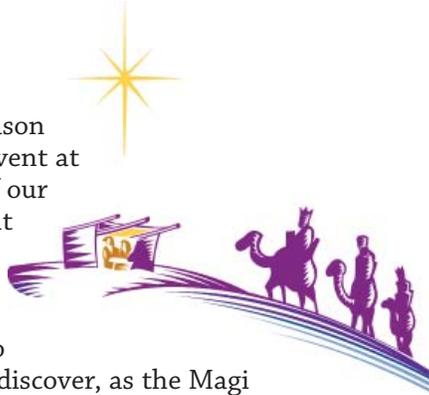
Photography will meet on Sunday, Jan. 18, following the 10 a.m. service to show photos about the theme, "doors and windows." Come with suggestions for themes for the rest of the 2015 year.

Children's Ministries

by Alicia Karwal

Epiphany Family Event

The season of Epiphany is the season of light. The Epiphany Family Event at St. John's celebrates the birth of our king. The wise men knew that something amazing was happening. A king was being born! It was so important to them that they made a long journey to worship this new king. You will discover, as the Magi discovered, that God is the light – the light we follow to Jesus!



This special family event will be Sunday, Jan. 4, during the regular Sunday School hour from 8:45 to 9:45 a.m. You are invited to first meet in Weertz Fellowship Hall to receive your Magi passport and map. You then will begin your journey, which will include several stations throughout the church building. During your journey you will participate in activities that will help you learn more about the season of Epiphany. You will collect a stastamp after completing each station activity.

2015 Classes Begin Jan. 11

Regular Sunday School classes will resume Jan. 11, 2015. All children are invited to join us from 8:45 to 9:45 a.m. each Sunday: 3-year-olds meet in Room 5; preschoolers meet in Room 6; kindergarteners meet in Room 7. First- through sixth-graders meet in the Chapel and later move to their classrooms on the second floor.

During the second semester, the children again will read from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Our schedule for the month of January follows:

Jan. 11: Free from Slavery – Exodus 5:1-6:13

Ask your child:

- What jobs would you like to do when you grow up?
- What difficult thing have you been called to do?
- God is always with us. How can we support one another and show God's support to others?

Jan. 18: The Red Sea – Exodus 14:1-30

Talk about these questions with your child:

- Name some things that seem impossible.
- What are some miracles that have happened in your family?

Jan. 25: The Ten Commandments – Exodus 20:1-17

Help your child think about these topics:

- The Commandments teach us to treat others as we would like to be treated. Describe a time you lived this idea at school.
- Which of the Commandments is easiest to obey?
- Which of the Commandments is hardest to obey? †

Youth Ministry

by Noah Niermann

You're Invited!

2015 Youth Fundraising Auction & Dinner
Friday, Feb. 27, 6 to 9 p.m.
Theme: The Decades!

The young people of St. John's would like to invite you (yes you!) to our 2015 Winter Auction and Dinner Gala. Mark your calendars for the evening of Friday, Feb. 27. Last year over 200 people

attended this event, and we hope to have just as many or more this year, so invite friends and family, too!

Tickets will go on sale this month. The event will once again be held at the Forte Ballroom just south of Wells Fargo Arena on Second Street.

Also, whether or not you're able to attend, please consider donating an item(s) to be auctioned during the evening. We are a creative congregation full of painters, dancers, woodworkers, spreadsheet masters, knitters, potters, stained-glass makers, writers, brewers, babysitters, cooks, and so much more. Would you be willing to make or share something for the auction? Or, do you work for a business, restaurant or organization that might be willing to donate a good or service? Large and small donations alike add lots of interest and excitement to the evening. Please consider helping in this way.

You may contact Director of Youth Ministry Noah Niermann or Pastor Bob Spiers if you have something you would like to share. Thank you!

150 Envelopes

Thank you so much to everyone who was able to support our youth fundraiser in the month of November. Your generosity raised more than \$6,900! Your gifts go directly to the young people of our congregation, allowing them to participate in formative experiences that grow their faith and deepen their understanding of the world. This year your gifts will help send young people to the National Youth gathering in Detroit and to the Boundary Waters in Northern Minnesota. Thank you! †





The Arts at St. John's

by Beth Ann Edwards



Louise Koch, Artist of the Month

Our January artist, Louise Koch, is exhibiting landscapes and winter scenes she has created over the last few decades. An artist's reception will be held Sunday, Jan. 28, from 1 to 3 p.m. in Weertz Fellowship Hall. Louise plans to attend, and looks forward to seeing friends and church family. All of her works are for sale.

Louise's Artist Statement:

I am very grateful to St. John's Lutheran Church staff for their assistance in arranging and setting up this show. I feel honored for the opportunity to share my work, and hopefully it will inspire the viewers. May it bring joy and pleasure as I have had in expressing my love for God's glorious creation. He is the Master Artist!



For many years, I was a weekend painter. I would pack up my oils and equipment and head out to the countryside where the beauty of nature lay waiting to be discovered. With a constant eye on the weather, especially the position of the sun and clouds, I would select a site and subject matter, throw down an old blanket and "set up shop."

Later, being a retired social worker, I had the luxury of more time to study art and to paint. My first love is the painting of landscapes. My favorite medium is watercolor, which I find exciting and challenging.

I have exhibited in many juried shows, including Polk County Heritage Gallery Annual Art Show, Des Moines Women's Club Annual Art Exhibition, Octagon Center for Arts, the Iowa State Fair/Fine Art Exhibition and the Iowa Watercolor Society. Commissions have been done for private individuals, the Iowa Limestone Company's 75th anniversary and Johnston Charter Bank.

Midweek Music Series

The Midweek Music Series begins 2015 with a special non-Wednesday presentation. On Friday, Jan. 2, the Hudson family, who will be gathered here from both coasts, will present a concert. Sue Hudson and Carol Hudson Biel, pianists, will be joined by Tom Hudson on the cello. Tom is a founding member of the Odyssey Trio, which shared music with us on Christmas Eve. The concert begins at 12:05 p.m. in the Sanctuary, and a light reception will follow in the Fireside Lounge. (Lunch will not be served on Jan. 2.)

Six Wednesday concerts are scheduled between Jan. 7 and Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18. Following Easter, the season will continue with five concerts, and our final presentation of the program year is Wednesday, May 6.

Please join us for music in the Sanctuary at 12:05 p.m. (free concert; open to the public). A light lunch (\$6 per person) is served in Weertz Fellowship Hall following the presentation.

- **Jan. 7** - Lyric Winds: Kim Helton, flute; Sue Odem, oboe; Kariann Voigts, clarinet.
- **Jan. 14** - Scott Davis Brass Ensemble
- **Jan. 21** - Rob Lumbard, blues and folk music
- **Jan. 28** - Sarah Plum and Drake string studio
- **Feb. 4** - North High School Gospel Choir (Vanessa Brady, director)
- **Feb. 11** - IMTA piano audition winners (high school pianists)

Performing Arts

The Arts Visioning Team has scheduled two performing arts events this spring. Both are free and open to the public. Please join us!

Choral Concert

Please join us Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 7:30 p.m., as the Iowa State Singers, directed by James Rodde, and the Waukee High School Vocal Choir, directed by Amy Hall, collaborate for an evening of fine choral singing. The concert will be performed in the St. John's Sanctuary.

An Evening with David Richards

Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 16, when we host David Richards, son of former St. John's Senior Pastor Elton Richards. David Richards is a Broadway producer and former marketing executive with the Des Moines Symphony Orchestra. †

Hospitality & Outreach

by Katie Tippins

All You Need Is Love

We are all familiar with John 15:12: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." It is direct and, on the surface, simple.

However...love **as** God loves. Pretty tall order. I am a mere human being – a sinner, flawed, weak. How can I love **as** God?

Growing up Catholic, pre-Vatican II, we were taught very early about sin. We even had categories – venial (minor infractions, misdemeanors, if you will) and mortal (very descriptive word, those sins were death to your soul and possible damnation unless you made it to confession before you died). Then when I was about 10 years old, Pope John XVIII convened the second Vatican Council. In my simple way of looking at our faith, sin and God's judgment was replaced by an emphasis on God's love for us, and our call to love each other.

While many thought that "softened" our relationship with God and our community, the truth is that it demands much more of us.

We toss around the word "love" every day. We love our family, our friends, certain foods, music, traveling, etc. But what does it mean to really "love" as God calls us to it. I decided to look for insight from a far greater mind. Please consider these two quotes from Paul Tillich, German American Christian existentialist philosopher and theologian widely regarded as one of the most influential theologians of the twentieth century.

"The first duty of love is to listen."

"There is no love which does not become help."

Listening is a lost art in our society, especially with increasing modes of communication that take away our face-to-face contact. Not only are we not even in the same room, we are reduced to acronyms. We lose our chance to perceive or "read" the body language, nuances or emotion – all of which are facets of really getting to know someone. How can we love someone we don't know? How can we attain that needed depth of connection? Because to actually love someone, we need to know them...and that begins with listening.

We need to know their story, their history and learn enough about them to know them as part of our human community and acknowledge them as one of God's children. We need to take an active interest in them. That means conversation, dialogue. Ask questions. Seek to know them. Love will then follow.

Now consider Tillich's second quote that leads to help.

Matthew and Luke both write of Jesus asking the crowds who will give something harmful to one of their children – a stone or a snake. His examples shows that we will not do

something harmful to someone we love. The action is predicated on love. Once we love, our help to others will follow.

Again, sounds simple. But this will only happen when we open ourselves to accept our own help from the Holy Spirit who gives us this gift in love and guides us in its implementation. Verbalizing love is easy; it's action that is difficult. Loving can connect you with people who make you uncomfortable. It can take you to unfamiliar places. You may be afraid to venture into unaccustomed places. But you will be given the strength, insight and guidance to follow.

Loving others is hard. But while you wonder if you're up to the challenge, think about who you are and what you've accomplished by being on the receiving end of love. It works both ways. And it all started with God loving us and asking us to love one another.

If you feel like testing this theory, please feel free to contact me and I'll help you find a means by which to try it. †

Women of the ELCA

Information provided by members of WELCA

Group Meetings

All women of the church are encouraged to attend group meetings for Women of the ELCA on Thursday, Jan. 8.

Lois Group will meet at 12:30 p.m. in Neumann Hall. Judy Munger will lead the group in a Bible study from The Lutheran magazine.

Sarah Group will meet at 10 a.m. in "The Mansion" room at Wesley Acres. Pat Donhowe is the hostess.



Outreach for January

Harbor of Hope Mission is January's outreach program. Items most needed at this time are food and clothing. Non-perishable food items like boxes of macaroni and cheese, Hamburger Helper and, as always, peanut butter.

Some ideas for winter clothing are sweatshirts, warm pajamas, mittens, stocking caps, and shirts and pants suitable for job interviews.

The Christmas gifts you donated in December have been delivered to New Directions. They were excited and thankful for your generous spirit. †

St. John's Lutheran Church
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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.



EAGLE CALL DEADLINE

The next deadline for all Eagle Call content is **noon on Monday, January 19**. Please send articles in digital format to Scott LaBlanc, scottl@stjohnsdsm.org. If you are unable to send it by e-mail, drop it off at the church office.

Thank you!