

LOVE LETTER

DECEMBER 2005

DECEMBER AT St. JOHN'S

Wednesdays in Advent

6 p.m. Soup Supper
7 p.m. Worship

December 4

First Holy Communion for 5th graders

December 11

Sunday School Christmas program

Christmas Eve

Candlelight family worship, 7 p.m.

Christmas Day

Worship, 9:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran Church
ELCA
1224 East Street
Grinnell, IA 50112
(641) 236-4946
stjohngr@iowatelecom.net
www.stjohngrinnell.org

Stephen Jasch
Pastor

WORSHIP

Saturday at 5:30 p.m.
Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Preschool through adult
Sunday at 10:45 a.m.

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Doug Mikel, president
Todd Nelson, vice president
Barb Baker, secretary
Gary Cook, treasurer
Steve Dudley, Properties
Jim Dunn, Stewardship
Anita Ford/Rose Osland, Education
Cheryl Irland, Worship, Music, Arts
Jo Olson, Fellowship
Mike Schaeffer, Service
Mary Schuchmann, Evangelism

Pastor's Pen

Grace to you and peace from Jesus Christ our Lord.

The following old Christmas carol tells the story of the Visitation of the angel Gabriel to Mary as recorded in Luke 1.

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame.

“All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favored lady.” *Gloria*

“For now a blessed mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honor thee;
thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favored lady.” *Gloria*.

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head.

“To me be as it pleaseth God,” she said.
“My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name.”
Most highly favored lady. *Gloria*

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born.

In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn.
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say
“Most highly favored lady.” *Gloria*

When God invites us to do something for Him, do we respond with the humility, joy and deep faith of Mary? As Christmas approaches, think about ways we can be good examples of Christian faith, like Mary. Merry Christmas! God's blessings to all.

*In Christ,
Pastor Jasch*





AROUND the CONGREGATION

A reminder

If you have not returned your pledge card and Time and Abilities sheet, please do so as soon as possible. The Budget Committee needs the numbers in order to do the financial planning for the coming year.



The budget will be presented at the semiannual congregational meeting on Sunday, Jan. 29.

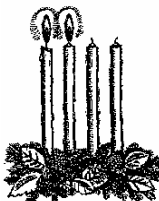
Giving thanks

Thank you from **Don and Doris Sundell** for everyone who contributed to the community Thanksgiving meal sponsored by St. John's..

Volunteers donated food and money for needed items, helped prepare and serve the meal, and delivered the dinners to those who requested a meal at home.

(A big thank you also to Don and Doris, for once again taking charge of this worthwhile project.)

Advent worship on Wednesdays



Midweek Advent services are planned for the four Wednesdays in Advent. In December, those dates are **Dec. 7, 14 and 21**. The 7 p.m. worship service will be preceded by a soup supper starting at 6 p.m. On Dec. 7, the service will be held in the Fellowship Hall and will include an activity as well as readings and prayers. Christmas Shares gifts also will be presented. On Dec. 14, the service will involve decorating the sanctuary for Christmas. The Dec. 21 service will be A Service of Lessons and Carols.

The 45-minute service offers a time for prayer and quiet reflection in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the secular holiday season

First Holy Communion

Our fifth-graders will make their first communion at worship on **Sunday, Dec. 4**.

If you can help for the months of March, April or May, please call **Julie Beach, Anita Ford, Connie Weir** or **Diane Winburn**.

Christmas Shares

Thanks for the generous response to the Christmas Shares gift program sponsored by Second Mile.

Almost all of the 60 gift requests were snapped up in the first week. Please return your wrapped gifts to the church (table in the Fellowship Hall) by **Wednesday, Dec. 7**.

Christmas Shares provides gifts at Christmas to those in need in our community.

Can you help?

Volunteers are needed to plan and coordinate monthly youth activities.

Sunday School to present program

This year's Sunday School Christmas program at worship on **Sunday, Dec. 11**, is a play about a play — a dress rehearsal, that is, for a Christmas pageant. It's titled "Gettin' Ready for the Miracle." What goes wrong? What goes right? How does it all work out? (You can probably guess!)



After the worship service, the play will be presented again at the Mayflower Home.

Church finances through October

	2005	2004
Offerings	\$149,946	\$156,432
Budget	\$188,056	\$181,870
Expenses	\$155,033	\$167,771

Average weekly attendance in October

	2005	2004
Saturday	39	42
Sunday	138	141

YOUTH NEWS



St. John's Youth Groups (grades 5-12)

Our Mission: "To Inspire, Connect, and Enrich Youth in Living a Christ-centered Life."

Shopping trip...for Christmas Shares

Youth in grades 5-12 will make a shopping trip on **Sunday, Dec. 4**, to buy gifts for our families in the Christmas Shares program. Meet after Sunday School (about 11:45 a.m.) in the Fellowship Hall, where we will divide up and head to Wal-Mart to do the buying. Afterwards we will return to the church to wrap the packages and have pizza. We expect to be finished between 1 and 1:30 p.m. If you have questions, please contact **Diane Winburn** or **Connie Weir**.



Looking ahead

Skiing and tubing at Fun Valley near Montezuma is planned for January. Watch the youth bulletin board for more information.

Call for volunteers

Adult helpers are needed to plan youth activities for

the months of March, April or May. If you can help, please call **Julie Beach**, **Anita Ford**, **Connie Weir** or **Diane Winburn**.

Serving this month

Junior youth will serve refreshments at the coffee fellowship after worship on **Sunday, Dec. 18**. The following youth are asked to bring two dozen treats that day: **Scott Bosse**, **Zach Osland**, **Jarren Ford**, **Amanda Potts**, **Courtney Peter** and **Jimmy Pinkerton**.

Parent helpers are **Rose** and **Keith Osland** and **Anita** and **Tom Ford**. Please bring the treats to the church kitchen by 9 a.m.

Bowlathon report

The community youth Bowlathon held in October to raise money for Big Brothers/Big Sisters earned close to \$5,000. Thanks to all in our congregation who supported the project.

God's Parade

In this season, we prepare for Christ's coming once more. The amazing thing is that Christ comes whether or not we are prepared. Christ is not stopped by our busy-ness nor slowed down by the things we don't get done. Christ has a way of breaking into our lives, ready or not.

When Christ comes, along come all those who are part of Christ's parade: People who feel far from God. People who are homesick. People wearied and worn by life. People for whom life's journey is especially hard. For their coming into our hearts and homes and congregations, special preparation might be required. In order to receive them, we might need to slow our pace or build a ramp.



We might need to listen with particular care or offer some additional support.

When we think about it, though, we might realize that it is not just "those other people" who need help along the way. We, too, may sometimes feel wearied and worn. We, too, may feel far from God and far from our heart's true home. Especially when we wonder if we can continue on the journey, God's gracious word is: "I am smoothing and straightening the way for you. Come, and be part of my parade."

Prayer: O God, you have prepared a way for me. Help me to be a way-preparer for others. Amen.

From: ELCA Meditations for Reflection, written by E. Louise Williams. www.elca.org

Church Council highlights

The following is a summary of the Church Council meeting held Nov. 21.

A NEW WATER HEATER has been purchased and installed, replacing a leaky one.

THE LETTERING on the outdoor church sign facing East Street will be replaced. The cost will be covered by money from the Memorial Fund. ASI Modulex will handle the project.

THE STAFF SUPPORT COMMITTEE, composed of the current council president plus the previous five council presidents, will meet before the Budget Committee meeting to recommend staff salaries for 2006.

COUNCIL MEMBERS discussed a new location for the cross that had been located at the corner of East Street and Eighth Avenue. The cross was removed earlier this year because of road construction at the intersection. No decision has been made.

MEMBERS of the Youth and Family Ministry Board will be invited to the December council meeting to discuss the process for hiring a youth director.

CELEBRATE HIS COMING

Christmas Eve
Candlelight service, 7 p.m.

Christmas Day
Worship 9:30 a.m.

..Keep in your prayers this month

Our Southeastern Iowa Synod encourages each congregation to include in prayers the following churches, groups and ministries

Week of December 4

Northern Illinois Synod

For all who gave their lives at Pearl Harbor, and their families.

Week of December 11

Christ the King Lutheran Church, Iowa City.

For all the victims of the recent natural disasters—the hurricanes, the earthquakes and the tsunamis, that they will find hope

Week of December 18

Central/Southern Illinois Synod

For peace in the world as we prepare for the Christ Child

Week of December 25

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Iowa City

For all troops and their families who are separated this Christmas, and for all who welcome the Christ Child in the midst of war

ELCA sponsors holiday program

“Joy to the World,” a one-hour ABC television special produced by the ELCA, will air on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day this year.

The holiday worship service includes a joyful mix of music and praise from ELCA African-American, Asian, American Indian, Arab and Middle Eastern, and Latino congregations.

The rich and diverse cultural blend begins with a Santa Lucia celebration in the Swedish Lutheran tradition.

Check local listings for the airtime in this area.

The program is produced by the ELCA for the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission.



SERVING THIS MONTH

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

Acolyte: Laura Weigel
Reader: Gary Cook

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

Acolyte: Christopher Weir
Greeters: Jack Templeton and Ray Parker
Reader: Jack Templeton
Communion Assistants: Don and Doris Sundell
Coffee Servers: P. Ashing, J. Lebeck, N. Pavey

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7

Acolyte: Kalen Winburn

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

Acolyte: Trent Baker
Reader: Verna Gerrish
Communion Assistant: Gary Cook

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

Acolyte: Renee Beach
Greeters: Dave and Shirle Huth
Reader: Barbara Stone
Coffee Servers: J., S. Bailey, M., A. Anderson

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14

Acolyte: Nathan Ford

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17

Acolyte: Alec Henderson
Reader: Bev Hatcher

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

Acolyte: Kyle Irland
Greeters: Lance and Deb Longman
Reader: Nancy Heineman
Communion Assistants: Scott and Julie Beach
Coffee Servers: Junior Youth

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21

Acolyte: Brandon Mikel

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24

CHRISTMAS EVE, 7 p.m.

Acolyte: Courtney Peter
Readers: Verna Gerrish, Janelle Luebben

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

CHRISTMAS DAY, 9:30 a.m.

Acolyte: Jimmy Pinkerton
Greeters: Larry and Dorothy Wade
Reader: Dorothy Martinek
Coffee Servers: Rebecca Jasch, K., R.. Osland

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31

Acolyte: Laura Weigel
Reader: Nicole Behrens
Communion Assistant: Nancy Beck

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sat	3	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	4	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		9:30 am	Worship with Holy Communion
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult
Tue	6	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
Wed	7	6 pm	Advent soup supper
		7 p.m.	Advent worship
Sat	10	5:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion
Sun	11	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		9:30 am	Sunday School Christmas program
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
		10:45 am	Sunday School at the Mayflower Home
Tue	13	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
Wed	14	Noon	Mary Martha Circle, Colleen Politz, hostess
		6 pm	Advent soup supper
		7 pm	Advent worship
Thurs	15	9:30 am	Lydia Circle, Colleen Politz, hostess
Sat	17	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	18	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		8:30 am	Choir rehearsal
		9:30 am	Worship with Holy Communion
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult
Mon	19	7 pm	Church Council
Tue	20	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
Wed	21	6 pm	Advent soup supper
		6:15 pm	Choir rehearsal
		7 pm	Advent worship service
Sat	24	6:30 pm	Choir rehearsal
		7 pm	Christmas Eve candlelight worship
Sun	25	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		9:30 am	Christmas Day worship service
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
			NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
Tue	27	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
Sat	31	5:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion, New Year's Eve

USHERS

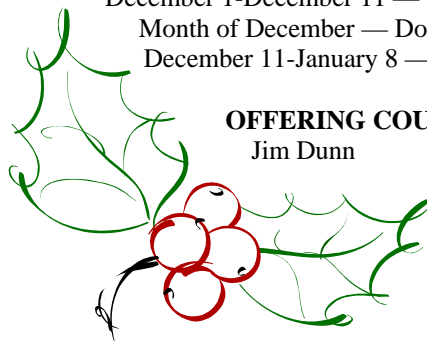
Ken Pearce and Brian Brown (*head ushers*), Aaron Wade, Larry Wade, Morgan Boehmer, Tammie VanHamme

ALTAR GUILD

December 1-December 11 — Lea Ann Dalldorf
 Month of December — Donna Beck
 December 11-January 8 — Shirley Jensen

OFFERING COUNTER

Jim Dunn



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Return Service Requested



GRACE MATTERS

Radio Ministry of the ELCA

Heard locally at 7:30 a.m. Sundays on KGRN, AM1410

DECEMBER 4

Advent Waiting

James 5: 7-10

None of us are particularly good at waiting. Many days we find it a waste of time. But what if the act of waiting actually had the potential to reshape our character? What if the excitement of the anticipation itself made us different creatures than they would otherwise be without the wait? (Part 2 of 4)



DECEMBER 11

Advent Preparation

Matthew 25:1-13

Sometimes engaging the simplest little ritual, or undertaking the silliest little routine, can make our hearts more ready for something we were not prepared to accept. There's no time like the weeks before Christmas to get our act together so that we don't just "talk a good Christian game" when it comes to Christmas, but we actually live it! (Part 3 of 4)

DECEMBER 18

Advent Hope

Romans 8:22-25

One of the most important things to figure out in life is what we hope for. True hope is not grounded in our circumstances. It isn't even based on some positive expectations we feel about the future. No, Christian hope is grounded in the faithfulness of God, who happens to demonstrate incredible faithfulness to us in Jesus Christ. (Part 4 of 4)

DECEMBER 25

Christmas I'm Witcha Babe

John 1: 1-5

It could be that the best way to grasp the incarnation of God – that decision that Jesus would be born inside the skin of a human being – is to practice wrapping ourselves inside of other peoples' lives. Chaplain Jeanne Olsen knows the importance of ministry that is all wrapped up in a care for others. She doesn't lead an abstract ministry, precisely because her Lord is not an abstract Lord.