

LOVE LETTER

DECEMBER 2006

THIS MONTH AT ST. JOHN'S

DECEMBER 3

Advent begins
First Communion for 5th-graders

DECEMBER 6, 13, 20

Soup supper, 6 p.m.
Advent worship, 7 p.m.

DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve worship, 7 p.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
10:45 a.m. Sundays

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Todd Nelson, president
Dale Lamb, vice president
Barb Baker, secretary
Gary Cook, treasurer
Steve Dudley, Properties
Carolyn Bosse, Donna Beck,
Stewardship
Anita Ford, Rose Osland,
Education
Margaret Amo, Worship, Music, Arts
Jo Olson, Fellowship
Mike Schaeffer, Service
Mary Schuchmann, Evangelism
VACANT: Youth

Pastor's Pen

Grace to you and Peace from Jesus Christ, Our Lord,

The Advent season is upon us. *Advent* is from a Latin word meaning "the arrival or coming" of our Lord. It refers to our Lord's three arrivals.

FIRST, the Lord Jesus arrived at his birth some 2000 years ago. Jesus came then in poverty. He was

born into the world to homeless parents in an old historic town called Bethlehem, in a manger, in an occupied land called Judah. Only the baby's family knew then that Jesus was God's gift — his Son, who was destined to even die as the Lamb of God, our Savior.

SECOND, the Lord Jesus arrives today in hope. Today our Savior comes to us in humble shape, too — in fellow believers, in the word of the Lord we hear preached, and

in the bread and wine of the sacrament of Holy Communion. He acts in and through us to influence the world for good.

THIRD, Jesus will arrive again in the future. One day Jesus will return to live among his people, no longer in our poverty or humble appearance, but sharing with us the strength and

beauty and goodness of our God for all eternity. He will return as the victorious Lord at his final coming at the end of time.

As we approach the Christmas season, may we remember these three arrivals of Christ, which the Advent season stresses. God's blessings to all.

*In Christ,
Pastor Jasch*



Christmas at St. John's

Midweek Advent worship, 7 p.m., Wednesdays, December 6, 13, 20

Sunday School program, 9:30 a.m. Sunday, December 10

Christmas Eve candlelight service, 7 p.m. Sunday, December 24



experience for everyone, according to coordinator **Brenda Mikel**.

Sunday School to present program

This year's Sunday School program will be held during the 9:30 a.m. worship service Sunday, Dec. 10.

Christmas Eve worship

A candlelight family worship service will be held at **7 p.m. on Christmas Eve**. Special music and readings are planned. You can also worship that morning — and/or the night before. Regular worship services will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 23, and at 9:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 24.

Stewardship call

As the end of the year approaches, your offerings are important to help the church finish the year in the black. Thank you for your contributions to help us meet our financial obligations.

Church finances through October

	2006	2005
Offerings	\$144,015	\$149,946
Budget	\$203,004*	\$188,005
Expenses	\$160,150	\$155,033

Average weekly attendance in October

	2006	2005
Saturday	45	39
Sunday	136	138

**Note: The 2006 budget includes money for a youth director, a position that has not been filled to date. For a more accurate comparison, the 2006 budget minus the youth position would be \$177,002.*

First Holy Communion

Our fifth-graders will participate in Holy Communion for the first time at worship on Sunday, Dec. 3.

Christmas Shares

Only a few gift requests remain in the annual Christmas Shares program. Tags with the requests can be found in the church narthex. The wrapped gifts are to be returned to the church by Wednesday, Dec. 6. A table in the Fellowship Hall is set up for the gifts. Christmas Shares, sponsored by Second Mile, provides gifts to those in need locally.

Help serve soup suppers

Volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve the soup suppers to be held prior to the midweek Advent worship services on Wednesday evenings. Recipes provided!

Call **Jo Olson**, chair of the Fellowship Committee, if you can help.

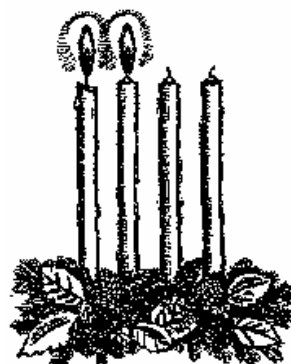
Kids Against Hunger

A team of about 15 people from St. John's (both kids and adults) participated in the first Kids Against Hunger work session on October 22. Kids Against Hunger is a volunteer effort to assemble meals (a dry rice-soy, chicken-flavored casserole) for people in Tanzania.

The group from St. John's joined teams from 12 other Grinnell churches and organizations to package enough food (assembly-line style) to feed 16,932 people, at a cost of 25 cents per meal! Each team also contributed \$250 to pay for the cost of the ingredients and distribution. Our contribution came from the church youth groups. The project was a satisfying, hands-on

Advent worship on Wednesdays

Midweek Advent services are planned for the four Wednesdays in Advent. In December, those dates are **Dec. 6, 13 and 20**. The 7 p.m. worship service will be preceded by a soup supper starting at 6 p.m. On Dec. 6, 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. 13, the service will involve decorating the sanctuary for Christmas. The Dec. 20 service will use the Holden Evening Prayer Service. 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



Youth News

SHARE in the spirit

Youth in grades 5-12 are invited to help buy and wrap gifts on Sunday, Dec. 3 for the Christmas Shares program. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 11:45 a.m. (right after practice for the Sunday School Christmas program). We will go shopping, then return to the church to wrap the gifts and eat pizza. We have three families (a total of 10 people) for which to shop and wrap, so many hands are needed!! Please sign up on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall or by the youth office so enough drivers can be arranged. We will finish by 2 p.m.

Junior Youth to serve

The following Junior Youth are asked to bring two dozen treats for the coffee hour after worship on December 17: **Zach Boehmer, Amanda Potts, Joey Nowasell, Kyle Irland, Jimmy Pinkerton and Rachael Pinkerton.** Parent helpers that day are **Rebecca Clauson and Tami and Dave Ditzler.**

Support our youth

Adult volunteers are needed to help with youth activities in 2007. A signup sheet is posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall for adults to volunteer to organize and carry out a monthly activity for one (or more!) of the three youth groups at St. John's. The youth would appreciate your help keeping them active in our church. Service projects and activities have been well attended. Be creative, be energetic, be a member of the SWAT* TEAM for our youth!! If you have questions, speak to **Bev Huebner.**

**S(erve) W(illingly) A(lthough) T(emporarily) so T(ogether) E(veryone) A(ccomplishes) M(ore).*

Help fulfill a dream Church sets appeal for Masuku family

When **Linda Masuku** and her four children arrived in Grinnell in 1990 after fleeing South Africa, St. John's Lutheran Church had a major role in helping the family adjust to their new life.

Now we have an opportunity to help Linda once again as she makes plans for a three-week trip to her native country to visit family and friends she has not seen in almost 20 years.

The family members in South Africa include her youngest daughter, who was 6-months old when the family escaped. The daughter was left in the care of Linda's mother with the intention of being reunited in a short time. That never happened.

During their 16 years in Grinnell, Linda joined St. John's and her daughters were confirmed here.

This month, St. John's is joining in the effort to raise money to help Linda pay for the trip. She is hoping to take two of her four daughters, at a total cost of \$6,700 for the round-trip airfare. Her travel dates are December 25 to January 13.

On the first two Saturdays-Sundays in December, St. John's will collect a special offering to help the Masuku family. To donate, put your contribution in an envelope and mark it *Masuku family*.

Linda has to date received close to \$2,000 from a special appeal at the Mayflower Home, where she works as an LPN in the health center. She has worked at Mayflower since 2002.

Let us at St. John's also help make Linda's dream come true.

The information above is taken from the summer and fall issues of the Flagship, the newsletter of Mayflowers Homes Inc.

NOTES OF THANKS

Thank you to everyone from St. John's who helped with the World Community Day event sponsored by Church Women United and held at our church on November 3.

Molly Urfer

Dear friends,
I want to thank you for the many, many prayers you offered for me following my hip revision surgery on October 4 and during the hospitalization that followed complications. Thank you also for the beautiful cards, flowers, visits and well wishes.

*Sincerely,
Lu Ahrens and family*

We are grateful once again for everyone who contributed to the community Thanksgiving Day dinner held at St. John's. Congregation members donated food and money, helped set up, serve and clean up, provided transportation to the church and delivered meals to those who requested a meal at home.

Don and Doris Sundell



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 3

Southeastern Iowa Synod

For the Companion Synod Summit and safe travels for missionaries.

Week of December 10

Seeds of Faith Lutheran Church, Mount Vernon, Iowa

Prayers for the people of Pare (an ethnic group living in and near Tanzania) as the drought continues to cause food shortages.

Week of December 17

Florida-Bahamas and Caribbean Synods

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

Week of December 24

Grace Lutheran Church, Muscatine

For our troops and their families who are separated at Christmas.

Week of December 31

Alaska Synod

Prayers of hope and renewal as we enter a new year.

Church Council highlights

The following is a summary of the Church Council meeting held November 20:

Music, Worship and the Arts: Seven members of our congregation attended workshops in Des Moines and Cedar Rapids introducing the new worship book. St. John's will begin using the book in January.

Properties: The new floor mats for the north and south entrances to the church are expected to arrive soon.

Stewardship/Memorial Committee: The Memorial Committee is looking into buying new folding chairs that would match the new round tables in the Fellowship Hall. The chairs, made of molded plastic, would be purchased as needed to replace metal folding chairs in poor repair. A request for memorial money to improve the organ's capabilities was submitted to the Memorial Committee.



Youth: To date, no applications for the position of part-time youth director have been received.

SERVING THIS MONTH

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2

Acolyte: Nathan Ford; **Reader:** Gary Cook

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

Acolyte: Kyle Irland
Greeters: Marion Templeton, Sue McDonough
Reader: Jack Templeton
Communion Assistants: Pam and Bob Ashing
Coffee Servers: P., B. Ashing, S., J. Bailey

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

Acolyte: Jimmy Pinkerton

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9

Acolyte: Christopher Weir
Reader: Pam Ashing
Communion Assistant: Bev Cook

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

Acolyte: Kalen Winburn
Greeters: Dave and Shirle Huth
Reader: Fred Hagemeister
Coffee: K., P. Davoux, B. Cook, V. Gerrish

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

Acolyte: Zach Boehmer

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

Acolyte: Scott Bosse; **Reader:** Brian Heineman

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

Acolyte: Katelin Dunne
Greeters: Fred and Sara Hagemeister
Reader: Nancy Heineman
Communion: Fred Hagemeister
Coffee Servers: Junior Youth

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

Acolyte: Joseph Reitz

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23

Acolyte: Trent Baker
Reader: Shirle Huth
Communion Assistant: Albert Knight

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

Acolyte: Renee Beach
Greeters: Bob and Pam Ashing
Reader: Dorothy Martinek
Coffee: Vicki and Fred Dillon

CHRISTMAS EVE

Acolyte: Nathan Ford
Readers: Janelle Luebben, Verna Gerrish

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

Acolyte: Kyle Irland; **Reader:** Jim Urfer
Communion Assistant: Nancy Beck

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

Acolyte: Jimmy Pinkerton
Greeters: Everett and Verna Gerrish
Reader: Pat Larson
Coffee: Jim and Molly Urfer, S. Hagemeister

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sat	2	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	3	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		9:30 am	Worship with Holy Communion
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
		10:45 am	Sunday School , Preschool to Adult
Mon	4	7 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
Tue	7	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room #9
Wed	6	6 pm	Advent soup supper
		7 pm	Advent midweek worship
Sat	9	5:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion
Sun	10	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		9:30 am	Worship, Sunday School Christmas program
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
		10:45 am	Sunday School/Preschool to Adult
Mon	11	7 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
Tue	12	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room #9
Wed	13	1:30 pm	Mary Martha Circle, Shirley Broders, hostess
		6 pm	Advent soup supper
		7 pm	Advent midweek worship, decorating the church
Thu	14	9:30 am	Lydia Circle, Verna Gerrish, hostess
Sat	16	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	17	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		8:30 am	Choir rehearsal, Music Ropom
		9:30 am	Worship with Holy Communion
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
		10:45 am	Sunday School/Preschool to Adult
Mon	18	7 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
		7 pm	Church Council, Meeting Room
Tue	19	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room #9
Wed	20	Noon	Autumn Leaves, Fellowship Hall
		6 pm	Advent soup supper
		6:30 pm	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		7 pm	Advent midweek worship
Sat	23	5:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion
Sun	24	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		8:30 am	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		9:30 am	Worship
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship, No Sunday School
		6:30 pm	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		7 pm	Christmas Eve worship
Tue	26	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
Sat	30	5:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion
Sun	31	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1420 AM
		9:30 am	Worship
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship, No Sunday School

USHERS

Ken Pearce, Brian Brown (*head ushers*), Aaron Wade, Larry Wade, Mike Olson, Tammie Van Hamme

OFFERING COUNTERS Doug Mikel, Todd Nelson

ALTAR GUILD

November 13-December 11 — Brenda Mikel/Connie Weir
 Month of December — Donna Beck
 December 11-January 8 — Shirley Jensen

NURSERY SUPERVISOR DURING WORSHIP

Dec. 3-Shirley Broders; Dec.10-Laura Weigel; Dec. 17-Kelly Rose;
 Dec. 24 -Rebecca Jasch; Dec. 31-Tammie Van Hamme

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(641) 236-4946

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Return Service Requested



GRACE MATTERS

Radio Ministry of the ELCA, with host, the Rev. Peter W. Marty

Heard locally at 7:30 a.m. Sundays on KGRN, AM1410. Here are the weekly topics

December 3: Abounding in Love

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

In the first of a three-part Advent series featuring in-depth biblical reflections and music of the season, host Peter Marty contemplates a powerful prayer of the apostle Paul. It's a prayer from the oldest book in the New Testament, 1 Thessalonians, that lifts up the quest for togetherness, holiness, and love that Christian people are hungry for in Christian community.

December 10: The God Who Waits

Malachi 3:1-4

In this second of a three-part series leading up to Christmas, host Peter Marty explores what is meant by "the patience of God." When our passions are short-lived, our behaviors uneven, and our sins offensive, few individuals speak with as much clarity to our lives as the Old Testament prophets. Malachi is one who gives us a clue for getting a fresh start on meeting the challenge of reshaping our distorted lives. His insight begins with the patience of God.

December 17: Four Directives for Peace with God

Philippians 4: 4-7

In the final segment of his special Advent series, host Peter Marty

takes a fresh look at one of the most striking passages ever written from a prison cell. Join him to capture what the apostle Paul must have had in mind when he asked his fellow Christians to rejoice, be gentle, not worry, and express thanks.

December 24: Silent Night

Luke 2: 1-14

In the cold rain and snow on Christmas night 1914, the unimaginable happened in the trenches of World War I. Young German, French, British and Belgian soldiers spontaneously threw down their arms and came together across the front lines to exchange gifts, sing carols, eat, drink, and even play soccer. Renowned historian Stanley Weintraub shares a vivid picture of how this forgotten moment in military history proved to be one of the most beautiful Christmas stories of all times.

December 31: An Imperishable Inheritance

1 Peter 1: 3-5

Not every treasure can be stored in a box. Not everything of value can be itemized in a legal document. Pastor, educator, and author Herbert Brokering outlines how he intends to distribute his lifelong wealth to those whom he loves. His list of "wealth" will surprise even experts who spend their life coaching others on how to leave a legacy of true worth.