

LOVE LETTER

MARCH 2007

THIS MONTH AT St. JOHN'S

MARCH 2
World Day of Prayer

MARCH 7, 14, 21, 28
Midweek Lenten services

MARCH 31
WELCA meeting

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

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

Lent means spring

Lent is the 40-day season that precedes the great Three Days and the 50 days of Easter. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent occurs at the transition time from winter to spring and functions as the preparation for the Easter festival. From its earliest beginnings, Lent was kept as a time of preparation for baptism at Easter. For those already baptized into the faith of the church, Lent was a season of baptismal renewal. This central baptismal focus continues for the church today.



Some may recall a time when Lent was primarily a season of penitence and sorrow. Certainly the self-examination involved in baptismal readiness and renewal will mean that Christians will observe in themselves their sinful nature and unworthiness, which leads us all to sorrow and repentance.

But when separated from the search for communal baptismal identity, such a seasonal expectation of penitence and sorrow could be viewed as pretense or too individual. Others may equate the time of Lent as a time to refrain from certain activities, such as "I'm giving up fatty foods for Lent." Again, such purging of excess and simplification of daily living may well be a part of baptismal preparation. But when such fasting is the center of Lent and not practiced as a way to confess our need for a God who feeds us to live in baptismal grace, the exercise is less useful. The discipline of Lent — prayer, fasting and almsgiving — all may continue for Christians, but in Lent such disciplines are best enacted when they engage us in baptismal living, and, particularly in an evangelical context, ought not be seen as exercises that somehow earn us merit before God. Lent will invite the believer and those new to faith to consider what baptismal living (and dying) means and how being baptized radically changes everything.

Lent, then, is not a season of applied sadness or forced sadness, but a time of growth, enabled both by individual and communal discernment for all Christians as they continually uncover the mysteries of baptismal living.

From *Preparing for Lent, 2007 Sundays and Seasons*, Augsburg Fortress.



Keeping in touch

During this transition time at St. John's, here are the ways you can contact the church.

The church office is open from **8 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday**. At other times, you can call the office at 236-4946 and leave a message.

Pastor Paul Nelson, our interim pastor, is at the church from **9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays** and from **2 to 4 p.m. on Wednesdays**. He will lead worship on **Sundays**, at mid-week Lenten worship on **Wednesday evenings**, and at the **fourth Saturday evening** service of every month, which will be a communion

service. At other times he can be reached at his home in Ames, 515-233-6947.

Note that during this transition time, Holy Communion at the Saturday service will be served only on the fourth Saturday of the month.

Muriel Johannessen, who is assisting Pastor Paul, is available for hospital calling and related pastoral care. She can be reached at her home in Newton, 641-791-1044.

Lenten services

Midweek Lenten services continue at St. John's on the remaining Wednesdays in Lent — March 7, 14, 21 and 28. The 7 p.m. service is

preceded by a soup supper starting at 6 p.m. The liturgy for the service is based on Marty Haugen's "Tree of Life."

Palm Sunday this year is April 8. Easter is April 15.

Serving in March

Senior youth will serve at the coffee hour following worship on March 18.

The following young people are asked to bring two dozen treats that day: Chana Weir, Katie Ditzler, Danielle Nowasell, Alex Huebner, Alec Henderson and Andy Walter.

Parent helpers this month are Craig and Connie Weir and Roger and Lisa Henderson.

An apology

This issue of the *Love Letter* was delayed because of the power outage on March 23 that caused a five-day shutdown of the computer used for writing the newsletter. Also, because the Church Council meeting was rescheduled to February 28, news of the meeting will appear in next month's *Love Letter*.

Dear St. John's Congregation,

As you are all aware, this is a transition time for St. John's. Your church council is working closely with the Bishop's office to determine the appropriate steps to follow as we search for a permanent pastor to serve our needs. We appreciate the service and guidance of Pastor Paul Nelson, as well as the assistance of Muriel Johannessen, during this time of transition. We are grateful also for the countless volunteers who have stepped in to make the church as solid and vibrant as ever. Rest assured your council is working together to meet your needs. We and welcomes your input and advice as we continue to develop the search process.

*Yours in Christ,
Todd Nelson
Church Council President*

Church finances through January 2007

	2007	2006
Offerings	\$12,495	\$15,667
Budget	\$17,605*	\$20,300
Expenses	\$17,374	\$22,383

**Note: For a more accurate year-to-date comparison of the church's 2007 finances, the budget above does not include money for a youth director, as did the 2006 budget. The search to fill the position is continuing*

Ministerial Association holds worship services during Lent

The Grinnell Ministerial Association is once again sponsoring a series of weekday Lenten worship services on Wednesdays starting at 12:10 p.m. The theme this year is Redemption in the Midst of Uncertainty, based on passages from the Book of John. The weekly topics, speakers and locations are listed below.



A light lunch will be served following the service, at approximately 12:30 p.m. A freewill offering will be taken for the meal (\$2 is suggested) to cover the cost of the food, with the remainder going to the Ministerial Association. **Note that the service on March 28 will be held at St. John's.**

On Good Friday, April 6, a longer service will be held, focusing on the last day of Jesus' life. A lunch will not be served after that service.

MARCH 7

First Baptist Church
Rev. Carol Myers
Redemptive Service, John 13:1-17

MARCH 14

United Methodist Church
Rev. Deanna Shorb
Redemptive Comfort, John 14:1-14

MARCH 21

St. Mary's Catholic Church
Rev. Charles Pope
Redemptive Grieving, John 15:17-24

MARCH 28

St. John's Lutheran Church
Rev. Herb Knudten
Redemptive Prayer, John 17:1-26

GOOD FRIDAY

APRIL 6

First Presbyterian Church
Rev. Tim Stewart
Redemptive Suffering, John 19:1-42

SPECIAL DELIVERY Meals in time of need

Nancy Heineman is now coordinating the church's effort to provide meals to congregation members who are ill, recently hospitalized, are new parents, or are in other circumstances when they could be helped by home-cooked food delivered to their door.

Nancy took on the job because she feels it's important that congregation members support one another in time of need. "It's a way to show that the church cares, that we are a church family," she says.

To be sure the program reaches everyone who needs it, Nancy asks that family or friends of anyone who could benefit from a meal to call her at 236-4131 or the church office at 236-4946 when a need arises. It's important to call as soon as a need is recognized, she said, so that volunteers can be contacted and a delivery schedule arranged.

The program could also use additional volunteers willing to prepare and deliver a meal when needed. To help, call Nancy or the church office.

WELCA will hear about mission trip to Louisiana

Lori Brown, a member of St. John's, will talk about her experience as a volunteer on a mission trip to aid victims of Hurricane Katrina at the quarterly meeting of Women of the ELCA (WELCA) at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, March 31, at the church.



The meeting, which is being organized by Sarah Circle, will include a light brunch.

Signup sheets are located at various locations in the church. Childcare will be provided. To make sure the nursery is staffed with enough volunteers, please indicate on the signup sheet the number of children you will be bringing.

NOTES OF THANKS

Dear members of St. John's,
Thank you for your generous support during the difficult time of Pastor Jasch's illness, death and the days that followed. Thank you also for the financial gift and for the food brought to us. And thank you to all who helped with the funeral and luncheon. Above all, thank you for your prayers and visits.



*Yours in Christ,
Rebecca and Anna Jasch*

I WOULD LIKE to thank everyone for all their thoughts and prayers during my illness and surgery. It means so much. God has blessed me. Also thank you to those who brought over the meals to our family. I appreciate your kindness and yummy cooking. Thank you too for the cards and phone calls. They were much appreciated. God bless each and every one of you.

Gaye Van Hamme

THANK YOU for all the prayers, calls and delicious meals while Ernie was ill. Thank you, thank you.

Ernie and JoAnn Blankenship

THANKS for the prayers, get-well cards and other kindnesses I received at the time of my recent hip surgery. They were all very much appreciated.

Jack Templeton

..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 March 4

First Lutheran Church, Newton

For the Conference of Bishops as they meet in Galveston, Texas.

Week of March 11

Southwest California Synod

For the Shoulder to Shoulder group traveling to New York City

Week of March 18

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Newton

For the Shoulder to Shoulder group traveling to Mexico

Week of March 26

Pacifica Synod

Prayers for the people affected by the war and for the troops serving overseas, and that peace will return

Join in World Day of Prayer on Friday

World Day of Prayer, a worldwide ecumenical event sponsored locally by Church Women United, will be observed in Grinnell with a service at **noon Friday, March 2, at the First Presbyterian Church, 1025 Fifth Avenue.**

World Day of Prayer brings together people of many faith traditions for a common day of prayer every year on the first Friday in March every year. During the day, prayers are offered all over the world, beginning with the first sunrise in the east and ending with the last sunset in the west.

The first organized day of prayer was held in the United States in 1920. Today, hundreds of thousands of people worldwide hold observances around the world. Each of the 170 countries that hold World Day of Prayer services has an organizing committee of ecumenical women representing many cultures, races and faith traditions. Each year, a different country creates the World Day of Prayer service.

The materials for this year's World Day of Prayer were prepared by women in Paraguay using the theme "United Under God's Tent" as a way of imagining how God acts. For Abraham and Sarah, God was like a mantle. "United Under God's Tent" is not only God's promise to us, it is an unmistakable call to action for a fulfilled life for all people.

SERVING THIS MONTH

SATURDAY, MARCH 3

Acolyte: Nathan Ford
Reader: Pat Starrett

SUNDAY, MARCH 4

Acolyte: Kyle Irland
Greeters: Pam and Bob Ashing
Reader: Larry Wade
Communion: G. Booth, S. Hagemeister
Nursery: Laura Weigel
Coffee Servers: Sue McDonough,
Fred and Vicki Dillon

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7

Acolyte: Jimmy Pinkerton

SATURDAY, MARCH 10

Acolyte: Christopher Weir
Reader: Karen Ashby

SUNDAY, MARCH 11

Acolyte: Kalen Winburn
Greeter: Dennis Van Hamme
Reader: Barb Baker
Nursery: Kelly Rose
Coffee Servers: P. and B. Ashing, N. Pavey,

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14

Acolyte: Zach Boehmer

SATURDAY, MARCH 17

Acolyte: Scott Bosse
Reader: Donna Beck

SUNDAY, MARCH 18

Acolyte: Katelin Dunne
Greeters: Jim and Sue Bailey
Reader: Shirle Huth
Communion Assistants: D. and J. Martinek
Nursery: Tammie Van Hamme
Coffee Servers: Senior Youth

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21

Acolyte: Joseph Reitz

SATURDAY, MARCH 24

Acolyte: Trent Baker
Reader: Sandy Falck
Communion Assistant: Sue McDonough

SUNDAY, MARCH 25

Acolyte: Renee Beach
Greeters: Steve and Cindy Dudley
Reader: Sue McDonough
Nursery: Rebecca Jasch
Coffee Servers: S. and J. Bailey, M. Amo,

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28

Acolyte: Nathan Ford

SATURDAY, MARCH 31

Acolyte: Kyle Irland
Reader: Gladys Booth

MARCH CALENDAR

Sat	3	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	4	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	5	7 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
Tue	6	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
Wed	7	6 pm	Soup Supper
		7 pm	Midweek Lenten worship
Sat	10	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	11	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		8:30 am	Choir rehearsal
		9:30 am	Worship
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult
Mon	12	7 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
Tue	13	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
Wed	14	11 am	Mary Martha Circle, Newton Country Club
		6 pm	Soup Supper
		7 pm	Midweek Lenten worship
Thurs	15	9:30 am	Lydia Circle, Sue McDonough, 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	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
Tue	20	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
Wed	21	Noon	Autumn Leaves, Fellowship Hall
		6 pm	Soup Supper
		7 pm	Midweek Lenten worship
		7:45 pm	Church council meeting
Sat	24	5:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion
Sun	25	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		9:30 am	Worship
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult
Mon	26	7 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
Tue	27	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
		7 pm	Sarah Circle, Judy Lebeck, hostess
Wed	28	12:10 pm	Community Lenten worship at St. John's
		6 pm	Soup Supper
		7 pm	Lenten worship
Sat	31	9:30 am	WELCA brunch and program (See page 3)

USHERS FOR MARCH: Terry Cline, Scott Jensen (*head ushers*), Brian Heineman, Steve Dudley, Danny Dudley, Shirley Jensen

ALTAR GUILD

February 12-March 12 — Vicki Dillon
Month of March — Rebecca Jasch
March 12-April 9 — Karen Ashby

OFFERING COUNTERS FOR MARCH: Keith Osland, Ted Urfer

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(641) 236-4946

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Return Service Requested



GRACE MATTERS

Radio Ministry of the ELCA

MARCH 4

Knute Ogren – Take A Breath

Mark 6:37

It has been said before that, “If I am hungry, this is a physical problem. But if my neighbor is hungry, that is a spiritual problem.” The spiritual problem of people who live with insufficient food, or who are food insecure, has reached staggering proportions. [Knute Ogren](#) is a young church worker and musician who decided to record a couple of CDs and donate all of the proceeds to fight global hunger. Like so many others, his contribution is (on its way to) making a significant impact.



MARCH 11

Elizabeth Hausler – The Foundations of Home

*Zephaniah 3:20*The Bible does not say much about building houses, but it has many things to say about what makes for a home. [Elizabeth Hausler](#) is well qualified to speak about building houses. She is the founder and director of Build Change, an organization devoted to building earthquake-resistant homes, but she is also well attuned to the requirements for making a home, working hand in hand with the people of Banda Aceh, Indonesia, who dream of a new life.

MARCH 18

Dr. William Davis – More Than a Bandage For the Poor

*Galatians 2:10*Mother Teresa is credited with saying, “It is a very great poverty to decide that children must die so that we might live as we wish.” [Bill Davis](#) has taken the striking power of this statement, posted it on his office wall, and decided it is the perfect inspiration to stop letting poor kids go without health care. He left his surgical practice almost 20 years ago to serve low-income people, and has never looked back. It's a compelling story of faith ordering one's deepest commitments.

MARCH 25

Murray Finck – Stretching Heart, Soul, and Mind *Matthew 22:37-40*

The fitness craze that is sweeping the country offers more benefit than just simply lowering weight, feeling energetic, and reducing the risk of diseases like diabetes and coronary blockage. As far as [Murray Finck](#) is concerned, a discipline of fitness can bring great spiritual blessing as well. This Evangelical Lutheran Church in America bishop cares about stretching the mind, body and spirit in ways that give serious attention to prayer.