

LOVE LETTER

APRIL 2007

THIS MONTH AT St. JOHN'S

APRIL 1

Palm Sunday, Confirmation

APRIL 8

Easter

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
515-233-6937

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

What are your dreams for St. John's?

In more and more congregations in the Southeastern Iowa Synod, interim ministry is increasingly followed as a model for mission and ministry.

An obvious question then is, exactly what is "interim ministry" and how does it differ from having me as your regular, permanent pastor?? Am I just "filling the pastoral shoes" until your congregational call process can run its course?? If we "hit it off," is it possible that I could be your full-time permanent pastor??

To put it simply, an "interim pastor" and an "interim time" are increasingly seen as necessary for congregations to be ready for the eventual arrival of a full-time, permanent pastor. An interim time is important in the life of a congregation because it allows its members permission and "space" for reflecting on its past in all of its reality, as well as to begin to look toward the future. Specifically, for congregational leadership, as well as all of a congregation's membership, this interim time is a time in which staffing decisions, and the tangible shape of a congregation's mission and ministry, get worked on, in anticipation of the "end" of the interim period. A congregation such as St. John's, for instance, might use the time to experiment and dream about what it would be like to be a congregation in the 21st century. For example, do we want a pastor alone to provide congregational leadership, or do we want a mix of pastor and a minister of youth and family ministry?? An interim pastor can assist the congregational leadership in the tasks of "trying on" various options for mission and ministry without the burden of thinking, "Well, we've looked into this and that...."

Further, a congregation can reflect back on previous pastors and, in general, the kind of congregational leadership that was provided in collaboration with lay leadership (i.e. the council and other committees and groups in the congregation). As an interim pastor, to put it bluntly, I can assist your congregational leadership in an unbiased, fairly objective way, since I am not "working myself into a job." And then, as a congregation works through the process of reflecting "backwards" in the congregation's history, it can more fully engage in working, planning and even dreaming about what the future might be for a congregation like St. John's.

During this interim period, you will receive periodic updates from your council. As members at St. John's, your input is invited as a vital, even critical, part in shaping this congregation's future mission and ministry.

What are your dreams for this congregation?

In God's peace,
Pastor Paul Nelson



CHURCH NEWS
AROUND
the
CONGREGATION

HOLY WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

Easter worship at 9:30 a.m., Sunday, April 8

This year St. John's will gather as a church community for a festival worship service at 9:30 a.m. On Easter Sunday. The service is an opportunity for the whole congregation to celebrate together the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The service will include a procession and special music by the choir and instrumentalists.



An Easter Breakfast prepared and service by the youth of the church will be held in the Fellowship Hall from 7:45 to 9 a.m.

Palm Sunday on April 1 will include the Rite of Confirmation for seven of our eighth-graders.

Services during Holy Week include a Maundy Thursday service at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 5, and a Good Friday Tenebre service at 7 p.m. Friday, April 6. There will be no service on Saturday, April 7.

Office hours

The church office is open from 8 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Pastor Nelson is in the office and doing visitation from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays and from 2 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays. Muriel Johannessen, an Associate in Ministry in the ELCA, is doing hospital calling and is available for other pastoral care.

Pancakes and more

Church Women United will hold a pancake breakfast from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 14, at the First Presbyterian Church, 1025 Fifth Ave. A freewill donation will be used to support the local "Kids

Against Hunger" program that provides nutritious meals to hungry families worldwide. The breakfast will include pancakes, sausage, applesauce, juice and coffee.

A call from the Scouts

St. John's Boy Scout Troop 347 is looking for boys from the congregation ages 10 to 18 to join the troop, as well as additional adult volunteers for the troop committee. The troop needs a charter organization representative (a member of the church congregation), a treasurer and an advancement chair (to help manage the Scouts' advancement records). The troop committee meets once a month and

the advancement chair would need to attend one Scout meeting each month. Please contact Fred Hagemeister at 236-3333 for more information.

Playtime at St. John's

Mothers with preschool children are invited to join a play group at St. John's that meets from 10:30 a.m. to noon on the first, third and fifth Tuesdays of each month at the church. In good weather, the group meets at Merrill Park. The group welcomes all families in the community. For more information, contact **Sara Hagemeister**, 236-3333.

WELCA cluster gathering

The WELCA Cluster spring gathering will be held from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, April 14, at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Tama. The event will include a Bible study, business meeting, music and program. The speaker will be Cathy Soppe, president of the Southeastern Iowa Synodical Women's Organization, who will talk about LWR Fair Trade. The cost, including a continental breakfast, is \$5. For more information, contact **Jo Olson** at the church office.

Church finances through February 2007

	2007	2006
Offerings	\$22,188	\$27,054
Budget	\$35,211*	\$40,601
Expenses	\$34,469	\$37,350

**Note: The 2006 budget included money for a youth director, a position that has not been filled to date. For a more accurate comparison of offerings, budget and expenses, the 2007 budget to date printed above does not include a youth director.*

Trip brings family together after nearly 20 years apart

Linda Masuku fulfilled a dream when she returned to her native South Africa for a visit earlier this year. Her trip was also a dream-come-true for family members there.

Linda had not seen her family in South Africa since she and four of her five children fled the country in 1988, eventually settling in Grinnell in 1990.

Her youngest daughter, whom she had left in the care of her mother, didn't believe Linda was really coming. "My daughter told me, 'I never thought I would touch my mother's face,'" Linda said.

Linda traveled to South Africa in part with financial help from St. John's Church, where she has been a member since arriving in Grinnell. "I am so grateful to the church," she said. "I couldn't have gone without that help."

In South Africa, Linda stayed with her daughter, who is now 22 and has two children of her own, and a sister. The families now live together in what was Linda's mother's house. "It was amazing," Linda said. "So much in the house was still the same."

She spent time with other family members and friends from long ago. On New Year's Eve, the extended family was all together. "We stayed up all night talking," Linda said.

While her mother's home seemed familiar, the country as a whole has seen big changes, Linda said. The end of apartheid has been a positive step, but poverty, crime, corruption and HIV continue to be major problems.

Her former friends and neighbors – and even people she didn't know – were frequent visitors during her stay. "They didn't believe it was possible to talk with someone from America," she said. "They wanted to know everything about my life."

Linda took five suitcases of clothes to give to her family. While there, she bought her daughter and her sister a stove, refrigerator and a fence for their yard.

Leaving her South African family was difficult. "It was very emotional for everyone," Linda said. "I asked my daughter not to come to the airport. I wanted to remember the visit, not the good-bye."

— *Mary Schuchmann*

Update on call process

The Church Council is beginning the process of seeking and hiring a new pastor. Council members are scheduled to meet Wednesday, March 28, with Pastor Walter May, the liaison with the Southeastern Iowa Synod who works with congregations in the process of calling a new pastor.

Pastor May will provide information and direction on the role of the council in the call process and how a Call Committee is selected.

With his help, the council will develop procedures for the call process at St. John's. That information will be given to the congregation as soon as it is finalized.

Based on our constitution and bylaws, and the guidelines established by the synod, the process is likely to include a Call Committee, a self-study that results in a written congregational profile, and interviews with candidates. The final step is a congregational vote that results in a call.

Synod guidelines for the call process can be found on the synod Website — www.seisynod.org. Click on Forms & Resources. Guidelines for calling a pastor are found under Call Process.

Congregational input is invited and encouraged during the months ahead. If you have ideas, suggestions or questions, please contact Todd Nelson, president of the council, or any member of the council.

Adult education opportunities

Pastor Nelson is offering two adult education classes starting in April.

He will lead a Bible Study from **6:30 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays** starting April 11. The sessions will look at the Book of Revelations and contrast its message with the popular "Left Behind" book series.

During the Sunday School hour, he will lead a class in parenting using ELCA materials titled "Parenting: Raising Faithful Children in a Fragmented World." This class will start April 1 and meet for six weeks (excluding Easter Sunday). Because there is no Sunday School for seventh- and eighth-graders in April and May, those students as well as high school youth are invited to participate.

NOTES OF THANKS

A **SINCERE** thank you for all the cards, calls and especially the prayers. I have a challenge to conquer, and with all of the prayers and the love of Almighty God, I will get through this fight with cancer. I have cancer. It does not have me.



Shirle Huth

WE WOULD like to thank Russ Schuchmann for all his help with the Properties Committee. We have called on him several times and he has volunteered to help with different projects. He is a big asset to our church and we really appreciate all his help.

*Steve and Cindy Dudley
Properties Committee*

THANKS go also to Bob Ashing for his help in solving the problem of water in the elevator pit. The help included pumping out the water and installing a new sump pump.

MEMBERS OF NOTE

Starting with this issue, we'd like to recognize members of our congregation – both adults and young people – for their awards, accomplishments and/or special activities. The challenge, of course, is to know what is happening. If you have news to share, please send or email it to the church office and it will be forwarded for publication in the Love Letter.

A.J. Baker, Morgan Boehmer and **Kyle Jaeger**, all juniors at Grinnell High School, have been inducted into the National Honor Society. Juniors and seniors are selected by a panel of GHS faculty members based on outstanding achievement in scholarship, leadership, character and service in their school and community.

A.J. is the daughter of **Mike** and **Barb Baker**. Morgan is the daughter of **Dave** and **Tami Ditzler** and **Jeff Boehmer**. Kyle is the son of **Brent** and **Dawn Jaeger**.

..Church Council highlights

Summary of the council meeting held March 21

A lengthy discussion was held about calling a new pastor. Discussion topics included the wish to include the congregation in the call process, ways to assess the needs of the congregation, options for staffing, the synod process for calling a new pastor, and formation of a Call Committee.



Financial: Treasurer Gary Cook noted that offerings in February were below budget, largely because the ice storm and power outage caused cancellation of worship services February 24-25.

Evangelism: The new Caring Team is organizing to provide support for Pastor Paul in visiting homebound members. The group will have an organizational meeting March 21.

Stewardship: Room-darkening blinds have been purchased for the south windows of the Fellowship Hall, using memorial funds contributed in memory of Pastor Jasch. With other memorial money, a total of eight round tables, four rectangular tables and 100 matching chairs have been purchased for the Fellowship Hall.

Youth News

Seventh- and eighth-grade Sunday School will not meet in April and May. Students in grades 7 and 8 are welcome to attend adult Sunday School with their parents. (See information on page 3.) Assistants are welcome to help with the younger Sunday School classes. Contact Anita Ford if you have questions or wish to volunteer.

The following youth are asked to bring treats for the coffee hour after worship on April 15: **Zach Osland, Troy Smith, Joseph Reitz, Ashley Mikel** and **Joey Nowasell**. Parent helpers are **Keith** and **Rose Osland** and **Randy** and **Julie Smith**.

All youth in grades 5-12 are asked to help serve the Easter breakfast from 7:45 to 9 a.m. Sunday, April 8. Families have been contacted about specific food items to bring. If you cannot bring the requested item, call **Bev Huebner** (990-2832) so arrangements can be made to have all items covered. Youth are asked to be at the church at 7:30 a.m. to help with serving and cleanup.

SERVING THIS MONTH

SUNDAY, APRIL 1

Acolyte: Scott Bosse
Greeters: Harlan and Michelle Honsbruch
Reader: Pam Ashing
Communion Assistants: Terry Cline,
 Karen Klug-Frischmeyer
Nursery: Nicole Behrens
Coffee Servers: J., S. Bailey, Amy Anderson

THURSDAY, APRIL 5

Communion Assistants: D. Beck, S. McDonough

SUNDAY, APRIL 8, EASTER

Acolyte: Trent Baker
Greeters: Jim and Sue Bailey
Reader: Nancy Heineman
Communion Assistants: Pam and Bob Ashing
Nursery: Sara Hagemeister
Coffee Servers: R. K. Osland, Shirley Jensen,

SATURDAY, APRIL 14

Acolyte: Renee Beach
Reader: Nicole Behrens

SUNDAY, APRIL 15

Acolyte: Nathan Ford
Greeters: Dave and Shirle Huth
Reader: Doris Selix
Communion Assistants: Jim and Molly Urfer
Nursery: Renee Beach
Coffee Servers: Junior Youth

SATURDAY, APRIL 21

Acolyte: Zach Boehmer
Reader: Bev Hatcher
Communion Assistant: Sue McDonough

SUNDAY, APRIL 22

Acolyte: Katelin Dunn
Greeters: Todd and Stephanie Nelson
Reader: Karen Klug-Frischmeyer
Nursery: Tammie Van Hamme
Coffee Servers: K. G. Johnson, Kelly Rose

SATURDAY, APRIL 28

Acolyte: Kyle Irland
Reader: Jim Urfer
Communion Assistant: Bev Cook

SUNDAY, APRIL 29

Acolyte: Jimmy Pinkerton
Greeters: Dale and Doris Selix
Reader: Paul Davoux
Nursery: Pam Ashing
Coffee Servers: N. B. Heineman, Verna Gerrish

USHERS FOR APRIL: Keith Osland, Fred Dillon (*head ushers*), Don Sundell, Harlan Honsbruch, Sidney Honsbruch, Gene Broders, Lance Longman

CALENDAR FOR APRIL

Sun	1	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		9:30 am	Palm Sunday worship with Holy Communion and Confirmation
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult
Mon	2	6:30 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
Tue	3	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
Thurs	5	6:30 pm	Choir rehearsal
		7 pm	Maundy Thursday worship service
Fri	6	6:30 pm	Choir rehearsal
		7 pm	Good Friday worship service
NO WORSHIP SERVICE ON SATURDAY, APRIL 7			
Sun	8	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		7:45 am	Easter breakfast, Fellowship Hall
		9 am	Choir rehearsal
		9:30 am	EASTER worship with Holy Communion
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
Mon	9	6:30 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
Tue	10	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
Wed	11	1:30 pm	Mary Martha Circle, Fellowship Hall
		2 pm	Caring Team meeting, Meeting Room
		6:30 pm	Bible Study, Meeting Room (See p. 3 for topic)
Sat	14	8:30 am	WELCA Cluster Meeting, Tama
		5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	15	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		8:30 am	Choir rehearsal
		9:30 am	Worship, Communion, commissioning of Caring Team
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult
Mon	16	6:30 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
Tue	17	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
Wed	18	Noon	Autumn Leaves, Fellowship Hall
		6:30 pm	Bible Study, Meeting Room
		8 pm	Church Council, Meeting Room
Thurs`	19	9:30 am	Lydia Circle
Sat	21	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	22	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		8:30 am	Choir rehearsal
		9:30 am	Worship
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult
Mon	23	6:30 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
Tue	24	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
		7 pm	Sarah Circle
Wed	25	6:30 pm	Bible Study, Meeting Room
Sat	28	6:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion
Sun	29	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		9:30 am	Worship
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult
Mon	30	6:30 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall

ALTAR GUILD

March 12-April 9 — Karen Ashby
 Month of April — Nicole Behrens
 April 9-May 14 — Nancy Beck

OFFERING COUNTERS FOR APRIL: Dan Huebner, Lamoyne Gaard

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Return Service Requested



WORSHIP SERVICES

Maundy Thursday, 7 p.m.
Good Friday, 7 p.m.
Easter, 9:30 a.m.

GRACE MATTERS

Radio Ministry of the ELCA

APRIL 1

Peter W. Marty – *Some Poems Don't Rhyme*

Luke 19:41

Palm or Passion Sunday, that seven-day-before-Easter event in the Christian calendar, has always had a split personality. Should the day celebrate a festive parade of Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem, or the sobering words of a mob demanding his crucifixion? In a meditation on that paradox, program host Peter W. Marty looks at what's behind Jesus crying over the city of Jerusalem. He connects the events of that ancient day with the collision we all know between what our life is, and what we wish it were.

APRIL 8

Peter W. Marty – *Hallelujah! Called by Name*

John 20: 1-18

If the resurrection of Jesus Christ interrupts a pattern of living that works well for us, do we really want the resurrection? Program host Peter W. Marty takes on this penetrating question in a special edition of Grace Matters that includes festive music of the day. Given the human instinct to want to hang on to things the way they are, or cling to things the way they were, Easter can be upsetting news. But if we're open to rethinking the shape of our lives, it is the best news for which we could ever hope.

APRIL 15

Philip Yancey – *Part I: The Magnanimity of Grace*

Ephesians 2:8

Philip Yancey, popular author and reliable spiritual guide, remains the "go to" person for any memorable discussion on the amazing character of grace. With his candor as a journalist and his honesty as a Christian pilgrim, Yancey outlines both the reliability and the unpredictability of grace.

April 22

Philip Yancey – *Part II: Relationship in Prayer*

Luke 18: 1-8

Philip Yancey returns to take a close-up look at the shape of prayer. If you have ever wondered what difference prayer can make in your life, this program is for you. Yancey covers the whole terrain of prayer, tackling some of the biggest questions surrounding its mystery. He explores the importance of relationship and why a meaningful prayer life will never evolve without some genuine hunger on our part to be in God's close company.

APRIL 29

Sara Spoonheim – *Courtesy Toward the Earth*

Romans 8:22

[Sara](#) Spoonheim partners with Christian, Jewish, and Muslim congregations to look at ways for these faith communities to be responsive stewards of God's creation. Combining her own vital faith and passion for life with a commitment to caring for this fragile planet, Spoonheim outlines the beauty of devoting ourselves to the concerns of ecology, justice and the good life for all.