

LOVE LETTER

MAY 2007

THIS MONTH AT St. JOHN'S

MAY 20

Last day of Sunday School

MAY 27

Pentecost

MAY 30

Mother-Daughter Supper

**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

How should we worship and pray to God?

I have observed (and participated in) discussions at various Lutheran congregations over the wording and phrasing of particular prayers or hymn texts or even the shape of the liturgy. In this regard, St. John's has been no exception. Here are my thoughts:

Many people argue that the "traditional version" of the Lord's Prayer ought to stay the same. To be "constantly"

changing the wording of a central and important Christian prayer like the Lord's Prayer (so the logic goes), makes the worship

experience less meaningful, and even confusing and frustrating. On one level, I can fully understand and appreciate this concern. There is a certain level of comfort and predictability that is reassuring in a world that often changes at breakneck pace. Congregation members ought to be able to relax and simply worship God without having to fuss about the wording of a particular prayer or hymn text or to sing a tune that is unfamiliar or difficult to learn.

And yet, on another level, this kind of thinking regarding Christian worship and prayer is troubling.

The logic seems to imply that God never changes and, therefore, our prayers and hymn texts or tunes to God should never change. An underlying assumption seems to be that God is somehow unchanging and timeless, and lives in the heavenly realm away from

me. And yet, we need to ask ourselves, when I worship God am I worshipping an idea about God or am I worshipping the living God? Out of human necessity, we have to use words when we pray or sing to God, but are my words not necessarily limited and fallible as I am?

And then, when I'm tempted to worship "my ideas about God," am I not really keeping God at a distance and separating myself from God?

ing myself from God?

More to the point, we still need to remind ourselves that our prayer wording or our

What is sacred is the God to whom our words and music point.

hymn texts or tunes can never be unchanging for all time. God is always much bigger than any of our thoughts or feelings. God is beyond our thoughts and imagination, even as God is as close as the nose on our faces. And while we use words and human song to express our praise to God, or to simply communicate in prayer, we can remind ourselves that our words and tunes directed to God are not sacred. What is sacred is the God to whom our words and music point. Will our hymnody evolve and change? Will the Lord's Prayer and other prayers evolve? Will our overall worship styles continue to go through evolution and change? Out of necessity, the answer to all of these questions is yes.

Thanks be to God!

Pastor Paul



AROUND the CONGREGATION

Seven confirmed at St. John's

Welcome to our seven eighth-graders who were confirmed on Palm Sunday. They are: **Trent Baker**, son of Barb and Mike Baker; **Renee Beach**, daughter of Julie and Scott Beach; **Nathan Ford**, son of Anita and Tom Ford; **Kyle Irland**, son of Cheryl and Mark Irland; **Jimmy Pinkerson**, son of Rebecca Clausen; **Christopher Weir**, son of Connie and Craig Weir; and **Kalen Winborn**, daughter of Diane and Aaron Winborn.

Mother-Daughter Supper planned

Mary Martha Circle is reviving a St. John's spring tradition—a Mother-Daughter event. All women and girls of the church are invited to a Mother-Daughter Supper at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 30, in the Fellowship Hall. If you don't have a daughter or a daughter closeby, adopt one for the evening—or feel free to come by yourself. Members of Mary Martha Circle will furnish the supper.

The speaker will be our own Linda Masuku, who will talk about her recent trip to South Africa, where she reunited with family members (including a daughter) she had not seen for 20 years.

You can sign up by calling the church office or on the posters located in the church.

Adult education offered

Two adult education classes are being offered at St. John's. A class in parenting is being held during the Sunday School hour in the Fellowship Hall. A class on the Book of Revelation is taking place from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays in the Meeting Room.

'Listening Post' set

Here's a chance to discuss important church issues with the leaders of our synod. Our area conference will hold a "Listening Post" at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 24, at Elim Lutheran Church in Marshalltown. Synod Bishop Philip Hougen and synod voting members to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August will be present to hear concerns that will be dealt with at the Churchwide Assembly.

Greeters wanted

Everyone likes a warm welcome when they come to church, and Saturday evening worshippers at St. John's are no different. If you would be willing to be a greeter for some of the Saturday evening services, please contact the church office.

On the mailing list?

All members should be receiving *The Lutheran*, the monthly publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. St. John's pays for a subscription for every household in the congregation. If you are

not receiving the magazine in the mail, contact the church office.

If you like the magazine, you'll likely enjoy the magazine's website—www.thelutheran.org It contains additional articles, discussion forums and blogs on issues of church and faith.

Call Committee update

The Church Council is scheduled to meet May 6 to select members of the Call Committee, the group that will lead the search for a new pastor. Council members agreed previously that the Call Committee should be representative of the church as a whole, with a balance of gender, age and length of congregational membership.

While the Call Committee is the official group that will interview candidates and make a recommendation to the congregation, all members of the congregation have a role in the process through a congregational self-study that will help determine the kind of leadership that is needed. Everyone is also encouraged to offer their input to the Call Committee members once they are chosen.

Church finances through March 2007

| | 2007 | 2006 |
|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Offerings | \$37,773 | \$42,150 |
| Budget | \$52,817* | \$60,901 |
| Expenses | \$45,584 | \$54,511 |

**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.*

St. John's reaches out to homebound members

St. John's has begun a visitation ministry called the Caring Team that is intended to bring the church – and the message of God's love – to homebound members of our congregation on a regular basis.

We are starting with 13 volunteers and at this point have a list of 23 people we are visiting or planning to visit. We have been meeting as a group with Pastor Paul and Muriel Johannessen to exchange ideas and learn how to be effective visitors.

Our visits consist of conversation, prayer and, if desired, a brief service of holy communion using the bread and wine that has been blessed by the pastor at a worship service.

A visit from the Caring Team is not meant to take the place of a visit from the pastor. (We know there are people who think that only a pastor can "officially" represent the church!) Rather, the Caring Team visits are intended to strengthen the connection between the church and those who are unable to attend worship – to update them on happenings at the church, help them to feel a part of the congregation, and make sure they feel valued and loved.

Also, having a Caring Team does not mean that other church members should not do visiting on their own. (After all, the members of the Caring Team are not the *only* ones in our church who care!) In fact, we encourage everyone in the congregation to make the time to reach out to those in our church who could benefit from a phone call, a card or a visit.

In the future, the Caring Team would like to expand its ministry to include visits and support for all members when needs arise.

Current members of the Caring Team include Donna Beck, Gladys Booth, Bob Falck, Sandy Falck, Jean Frana, Vic Frana, Rebecca Jasch, Nancy Locker, Sue McDonough, Brenda Mikel, Mary Schuchmann, Dale Selix, Nancy Urfer, as well as Muriel Johannessen, Pastor Paul Nelson.

If you know of other congregation members who would like to be visited, please contact the church office or speak to Sue McDonough or Mary Schuchmann.

And we can always use more volunteer visitors

Youth News

PASTOR PAUL invites high school-age young people to join him in a synod-sponsored service learning trip to El Paso, TX, June 16-22, to see and experience life on the U.S.-Mexico border. Total cost (including airfare) is \$300. If you are interested, contact Pastor Walter May or Kathy Smith at the Southeastern Iowa Synod office (319-338-1273) ASAP.

REGISTRATION BLANKS for Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp near Story City are available outside the youth office. This summer's theme, "Collision," will explore the ways in which Jesus' teaching "collided" with the popular thoughts of the day and how it continues to "collide" with young people today.

SENIOR YOUTH will serve at the coffee hour after worship on Sunday, May 20. The following youth are asked to bring two dozen treats that day: are **Morgan Boehmer, Sydney Honsbruch, Nathan Beach, Brad Ditzler, Shannon Potts** and **Brandon Mikel**. Parent helpers that day are **Tim Potts** and **Harlan and Michelle Honsbruch**.

NOTEWORTHY

Named to the National Art Honor Society at Grinnell High School were **Sydney Honsbruch** and **Danielle Nowasell**.

Nathan Ford was a winner of the Elks Lodge hoop-shoot contest.

Joe Nowasell was among four area students to advance to the Invention Convention state competition.

Christopher Weir won first place in the softball throw and first place in the 100 meter walk at the Special Olympics district competition. He will participate in the state meet at Ames on May 18.

Tammie Van Hamme was one of three GHS students to receive the first Matt Lagaveen Character Award, which recognizes strong interpersonal skills.

Trent Baker has been recognized for his score (top 1 percent) in math testing. **Oliver VandeStouwe** and **Ashley Mikel** competed in a regional math event.

Chana Weir, Brandon Mikel, Alec Henderson and **Kyle Jaeger** are members of the award-winning Grinnell High School jazz band.

NOTES OF THANKS

THANK YOU to **Roger and Lisa Henderson** for the special music during Lent; to **Roger Henderson** for helping to scan music for use in the worship bulletins; to **Chana Weir and Jackie Ernst** for providing music during Lent; to the **Celebration Singers** for their ongoing musical contributions; and to **Bev Huebner** for her help with confirmation.



Jo Olson

I WOULD LIKE to thank everyone for the prayers, calls, good food and flowers since I have been recuperating at home, then at GMRC and now in Mercy Hospital in Des Moines. I cannot begin to tell you what it means to me to have such a wonderful church family. A special thanks to Doris and Don Sundell for keeping Norm company, and to Pastor Paul and Muriel Johannessen for their prayers, visits and calls.

Marilyn Erickson

MANY THANKS for the prayers, cards, and phone calls following my recent surgery.

Sue McDonough

I WISH to thank everyone for the cards, and phone calls after my surgery at Grinnell Regional Medical Center and after my radiation treatments in Gulf Breeze, Florida.

*God bless you,
Leora Jones*

REVEREND FUN WWW.REVERENDFUN.COM



NO WAY MAN ... YOU KNOW I DON'T WAIT IN LONG LINES

Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School 2007 will be July 8-12 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Grinnell United Methodist Church. It is open to all children in the community in preschool through grade 5.

We're excited about this year's program, titled Galilee by-the-Sea. During the week the children will step back in time and discover that the incredible accounts in the Bible really did happen!

Jesus chooses his first disciples
Jesus teaches on a mountainside
Jesus heals many
Jesus calms a storm
Jesus feeds 5,000

There will be story time, drama, singing, crafts, seaside playground, and tribe time. What a great way to discover Jesus!

Signup sheets will be going home with the children and will also be available in the church office. Please return to the office by Friday, June 8.

We need adults or teenagers to help. Jobs include class leaders, helpers with seaside playground and crafts (toy making, rope making, sandal making and wood project), and actors/actresses for drama skits. Signup sheets are available in the church office or contact Rose Osland at 236-8572.

Church Council highlights

Here is a summary of the Church Council meeting held April 18.

Council members agreed that the active search for a youth director would be put on hold until a new pastor is hired and begins work.

Council members voted to spend up to \$1,200 to replace the computer in the church office and buy any needed software. The present computer will be used in the pastor's office.. Money for the purchases will come from the Memorial Fund.

The council will meet May 6 to select members of the Call Committee.

STEWARDSHIP: Six communion kits for home use will be purchased for the new Caring Team, using memorial funds. The Memorial Committee is also looking into the purchase of a processional cross to be used on special occasions in the church year.

EDUCATION: Vacation Bible School will be held July 8-12 in cooperation with other Grinnell churches.

PROPERTIES: Portable parking barriers will be installed on the south side of the north parking lot in order to mark the line between the pavement and the grass.

SERVING IN MAY

SATURDAY, MAY 5

Acolyte: Joseph Reitz
Reader: Sue McDonough

SUNDAY, MAY 6

Acolyte: Nathan Ford
Greeters: Pam and Bob Ashing
Reader: Nancy Heineman
Communion Assistants: Fred England, Fred Hagemeister
Nursery: Rebecca Jasch
Coffee Servers: G., K. Johnson, Kelly Rose

SATURDAY, MAY 12

Acolyte: Christopher Weir
Reader: Ed Hatcher
Communion Assistant: Nancy Beck

SUNDAY, MAY 13

Acolyte: Trent Baker
Greeters: B., N. Heineman, K. Stepanek
Reader: Mike Schaeffer
Nursery: Shirley Broders
Coffee Servers: B., N. Heineman, K. Stepanek

SATURDAY, MAY 19

Acolyte: Renee Beach
Reader: Molly Urfer

SUNDAY, MAY 20

Acolyte: Zach Boehmer
Greeters: John and Madge Ruchotzke
Reader: Margaret Amo
Nursery: Tammie Van Hamme
Coffee Servers: Senior Youth
Communion Assistants: Kathy, Gaylen Johnson

SATURDAY, MAY 26

Acolyte: Scott Bosse
Reader: Karen Klug-Frischmeyer
Communion Assistant: Molly Urfer

SUNDAY, MAY 27

Acolyte: Katelin Dunne
Greeters: Scott and Shirley Jensen
Reader: Kathy Johnson
Nursery: Laura Weigel
Coffee Servers: B., D. Mikel, Pam Ashing



CALENDAR FOR MAY

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Tue | 1 | 7 am | Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner |
| | | 1 pm | Quilt Making, Quilt Room |
| Wed | 2 | 6:30 pm | Bible Study, Book of Revelations |
| Sat | 5 | 5:30 pm | Worship |
| Sun | 6 | 7:30 am | Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM |
| | | 9:30 am | Worship with Holy Communion |
| | | 10:30 am | Coffee Fellowship |
| | | 10:45 am | Church Council special meeting |
| | | 10:45 am | Sunday School, Preschool to Adult |
| Mon | 7 | 6:30 pm | Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall |
| Tue | 8 | 7 am | Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner |
| | | 1 pm | Quilt Making, Quilt Room |
| Wed | 9 | 1:30 pm | Mary Martha Circle |
| | | 6:30 pm | Bible Study, Meeting Room |
| Sat | 12 | 5:30 pm | Worship |
| Sun | 13 | 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 | 14 | 6:30 pm | Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall |
| Tue | 15 | 7 am | Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner |
| | | 1 pm | Quilt Making, Quilt Room |
| Wed | 16 | Noon | Autumn Leaves, Fellowship Hall |
| | | 6:30 pm | Bible Study, Meeting Room |
| Thurs | 17 | 9:30 am | Lydia Circle |
| Sat | 19 | 5:30 pm | Worship |
| Sun | 20 | 7:30 am | Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM |
| | | 8 a.m. | High School Senior Breakfast, Fellowship Hall |
| | | 9:30 am | Worship with Holy Communion |
| | | 10:30 am | Coffee Fellowship |
| | | 10:45 am | Last day of Sunday School |
| Mon | 21 | 6:30 pm | Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall |
| Tue | 22 | 7 am | Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner |
| | | 1 pm | Quilt Making, Quilt Room |
| | | 7 pm | Sarah Circle |
| Wed | 23 | 6:30 pm | Bible Study, Meeting Room |
| | | 8 pm | Church Council, Meeting Room |
| Sat | 26 | 5:30 pm | Worship with Holy Communion |
| Sun | 27 | 7:30 am | Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM |
| | | 8:30 am | Choir rehearsal |
| | | 9:30 am | PENTECOST Worship |
| Mon | 28 | 6:30 pm | Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall |
| Tue | 29 | 7 am | Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner |
| | | 1 pm | Quilt Making, Quilt Room |
| Wed | 30 | 6:30 pm | Mother/Daughter Supper |

ALTAR GUILD

April 9–May 14 — Nancy Beck
 Month of May — Diane Ruchotzke
 May 14–June 11 — Jo Olson

OFFERING COUNTERS FOR MAY

Diane Ruchotzke, Fred and Vicki Dillon

USHERS FOR MAY

Rick Weigel, Duane Dufoe (*head ushers*), Paul Davoux, Fred Hagemeister, A.J. Baker

LOVE LETTER

St. John's Lutheran Church
1224 East Street
Grinnell, Iowa 50112
(641) 236-4946

Non-profit Org.
U.S Postage
PAID
Grinnell, Iowa
Permit #134

MAY 2007

LOVE LETTER is published monthly by St. John's Lutheran Church. Deadline for each issue is the 20th of the previous month.

Return Service Requested

GRACE MATTERS

Radio Ministry of the ELCA, hosted by the Rev. Peter Marty
Heard locally at 7:30 a.m. Sundays on KGRN, AM1410

MAY 6

Philip Wogaman – No More Violence

Luke 22:35-38

Have you ever wondered about the really complex question: "Why is it that the United States is both the most religious nation in the Western World and yet the most violent?" This edition of Grace Matters takes on the topic of our easy drift toward accepting violence as a way of life.

MAY 13

Rick Steves – Expanding Your World

Luke 3:22

The best way to get to know other people is to meet them where they live their lives. We know this to be true from our local experience. Rick Steves, popular travel host for Public Television, reminds us that it is also true globally. Inspired by the personal belief that "this planet is full of equally precious people," Steves knows well how to connect his two vocations of being a Christian and a travel teacher. It's a winning combination, as you'll discover from his passion for being a thoughtful traveler.

MAY 20

Rob Owen – The Limits of Celebrity Worship

Matthew 20:20-23

Rob Owen is the president of the National Association of Television Critics, a group of journalists who regularly size up the state of television programming. In a world where most of us have a tendency to want to associate with others whose lives appear more exciting than our own, celebrity worship has its limits. Life in Christ has its reasons why.

MAY 27

Saliers/Saliers – Saturday Night & Sunday Morning

1 Corinthians 2:9

In a day when many people don't know how to make sense of Saturday night folk, pop, or rock music alongside of Sunday morning sacred music, it helps to hear how one family weaves the two realms together. Do a masterful job of connecting music and spirituality. Emily Saliers, lead singer with the Indigo Girls, and her father, Don Saliers, a church musician and professor of Christian worship, do a masterful job of connecting music and spirituality.