

# LOVE LETTER

SEPTEMBER 2007

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  
515-203-9525  
pastornelson@iowatelecom.net  
**Muriel Johannessen**, assisting  
641-791-1044

## WORSHIP

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

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**  
**10:45 a.m. Sunday**

**OFFICE HOURS**  
**Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday**  
**8 a.m. to noon**  
**At other times, leave message**  
**at the office, 236-4946, or call Jo**  
**Olson, 641-990-0618**

## COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

**Dale Lamb**, president  
**Bob Falck**, vice president  
**Bev Cook**, secretary  
**Gary Cook**, treasurer  
**Dan Huebner**, Properties  
**Carolyn Bosse, Donna**  
**Beck**, Stewardship  
**Stephanie Nelson**, Education  
**Margaret Amo**, Worship,  
Music, Arts  
**Jo Olson**, Fellowship  
**Mike Schaeffer**, Service  
**Sue McDonough**, Evangelism  
**Amy Anderson**, Youth

## *From Pastor Paul*

**W**hat is a church's main reason for existing?? Why does this congregation exist in this particular place and time?? To put it still another way, what is this church's mission?? During this transitional time, we can never ask ourselves questions like this too many times.

By the same token, a variety of answers can be given. To serve its members. To be inspired each Saturday evening or Sunday morning. To look after its membership and meet their spiritual needs. To educate its young people into the basics of the Christian faith. To serve the needy and assist the struggling in our midst. To create and expand our circle of friends.

These answers are all good. Yet, I don't think they get at the heart of what St. John's is really all about.

At the heart of a congregation's reason for existing is its "missio Dei," or its stewardship of God's mission for the area in which it is located. In other words, the central and basic question we need to ask ourselves in this transitional period is: what is God calling us to be and to do?? Wise pastoral leadership is important. Confident and capable lay leadership in a congregation is equally important. But to my way of thinking, what is centrally important is a vision --- preferably God's vision for St. John's. A vision according to a biblical understanding is a means by which God's Spirit works through God's people to proclaim the Good News of Jesus, through both words and deeds. And, a congregation like St. John's is a kind of "mission outpost" for God's

mission or vision for a locality like Grinnell.

A vision also does not just "drop out of heaven." It is prayed about. It is planned for. It is developed through dialogue and "give and take" among church members and others in the Grinnell community. By the way, that is why the Congregational Mission Profile that St. John's Call Committee is doing is so critically important. Not merely to find a pastor to "fill the pulpit." Not just to "get on with normal, congregational life." Not for "keeping everyone happy." A good, healthy mission for a congregation like St. John's is not focused on itself and how it can "maintain itself."

Instead, it is outward-focused, oriented towards people's spiritual/material needs. It generally believes that a congregation like St. John's can be a welcoming, spiritual home for lots of diverse, interesting and even questioning people in the community. God's mission for St. John's might well be different from other churches in the community but the definition of the word, "mission" has a definite implication of an "outward focus." It pushes itself outside of itself.

Your Call Committee has been busily working and gathering and analyzing information and data provided to it from St. John's members. It is progressing and seeking to broadly represent all of St. John's membership --- at least as much as is humanly possible. In this important work, it needs your prayers and support and input.

God's peace to you,

*Pastor Paul Nelson*



# AROUND the CONGREGATION

## In sympathy

Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to the families of St. John's members who have died recently.

To the family of Betty Rolf, who died July 25. Graveside services were held July 28 at Rose Hill Memorial Gardens in Marshalltown.

To the family of Doug Mikel, who died August 9. His funeral was held August 14 at the Grinnell Christian Church, with burial in Hazelwood Cemetery.

To the family of Melba Strickler, who died August 11. Her funeral was August 15 at St. John's, with burial at Hazelwood Cemetery.

To the family of Eisac Kurk, infant son of Casie VandeStouwe and Adam Kurk, who died August 23. His funeral was held August 28 at Smith Funeral Home.

Sympathy is also extended to Donna Beck on the death of her brother John Lippincott; to Jan Sherlock, on the death of her mother Beulah Altemeier; and to Loren and Peggy Kolpin, on the death of Loren's brother, Ken Kolpin; and to Gaye Van Hamme, on the death of her mother, Ivadene Whitman; and to Pat Larson, on the death of her mother, Elma Maxon.

Word has been received of the death August 24 of Esther Bennett, a former member of St. John's. She lived in Gladbrook.

*In Christ is the Resurrection and the Life.*

## Baptized

Reese Elizabeth Henderson, daughter of Kerri Deppe Henderson and Patrick Henderson, was baptized August 26 at St. John's. Her sponsors are Eric and Mindy Deppe.

## Born

Congratulations to Bev and Gary Cook on the birth of a grandson Stephen Christopher Cook. Stephen was born August 15 in St. Louis. His parents are Katie and Kevin Cook of Ballwin, Mo.

## Married

Debra Whitaker and Anthony Cronin were Married August 4 at St. John's. Their parents are Dena and David Amo, Dennis and Deb Whitaker, and Mark and Kimberly Cronin.

Kate Heineman and Lee Henderson were married August 11 at Herrick Chapel. Their parents are Nancy and Brian Heineman and Jim Henderson and Valarie Blancalana.

## Sunday School starting

**Rally Day** — the start of Sunday School at St. John's — will be held Sunday September 9! This special day signifies the end of summer vacation and the return to Sunday School for all ages. Don't miss this opportunity to **Rally** behind God's intention that all Christians — children, youth and adults -- grow and learn. The **Rally Day** theme this year will be "A Call to Prayer."

Some activities for children will include a Prayer Wreath, a Prayer Chain and of course have a special Prayer Treat. We look forward to seeing all of you on the first day of Sunday School on September 9 — **Rally Day!**

**As of August 27, the Sunday School is still in need of three teachers. Please call Stephanie Nelson if you can help.**

## Congratulations, Cheryl

Cheryl Irland, one of our organists, received a Certificate in Church Music from the national Leadership Program for Musicians at the Synod Assembly in June. Cheryl completed a two-year study of church music at Wartburg College that involved classes in organ, hymnody, liturgy, worship planning and musicianship.

## Stewardship—more than \$

At worship services starting September 22-23 and continuing through October, chairman of various committees will explain the opportunities for service at St. John's. You'll have a chance to indicate your areas of interest on the Time and Abilities sheets that will be mailed to members in November.

## Church finances through July 2007

	2007	2006
Offerings	\$98,979	\$100,281
Budget	\$123,240*	\$143,103
Expenses	\$98,437	\$116,489

*\*Note: The 2007 budget does not include money for a youth director, a position that was included in the 2006 budget. The search for a youth director is on hold, pending the call of a new pastor.*

# St. John's Youth Ministry

**Our mission: To Inspire, Connect, and Enrich Youth in Living a Christ-Centered Life.**

## SWAT TEAM is back!

The youth ministry at St. John's is carried out by the SWAT Team — **S**erve **W**illingly **A**lthough **T**emporarily so that **T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore. Parents—as well as others in the congregation—are asked to help when possible in planning events, making phone calls, providing refreshments, etc. Amy Anderson heads the Youth Committee. She will be in touch when assistance is needed.

## Kickoff event

The opening activity for the year for grades 5-12 will be sand volleyball at Ahrens Park on **Sunday, September 9**, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Water and sports drinks will be provided.

The event will start with a brief meeting to gather ideas on what kinds of activities and service projects the youth are interested in. Parents are encouraged to attend in order to indicate how they will be able to help during the year.

## Serving in September

Youth members of St. John's provide refreshments and serve at the coffee hour on the third Sunday of every month. Donations are used to pay for youth activities and projects during the year.

Serving on September 16 will be Ashley Mikel, Caprise Honsbruch, Jacob Lamb, Chance Winburn and Rachel Pinkerton. Parent helpers that day are Dale and Mary Lamb and Aaron and Diane Winburn.

## Call Committee at work

The Call Committee is continuing to lay the groundwork for calling a new pastor for St. John's. The groundwork includes tallying the survey that was given to the congregation in July, and filling out the Congregational Mission Profile that helps the synod match our needs and desires with available candidates.

A total of 138 surveys were counted – mostly from those who attended worship services on July 14-15, but also from those who mailed in their responses. The number is considered a good sample of the congregation. The top eight areas of most essential need in our congregation, as indicated in the survey, are listed in the adjoining box.

The committee is currently completing the Congregational Mission Profile and collecting demographic data about our congregation and community. When that information is prepared, it must be approved by the Church Council and then sent to the synod office

for its use in finding the right candidates..

At this point, the interview process begins. Our Call Committee has decided to interview three candidates before making a decision to issue a call (rather than making a decision on one candidate at a time). After interviewing the three candidates, the committee will recommend one candidate to the Church Council. The council, in turn, will present the candidate to the congregation, after which the congregation will take a vote. After a favorable vote, the candidate has 30 days to respond to the call.

According to the synod office, the call process typically takes between 12 and 18 months.

As always, we ask the congregation to give prayerful support to the Call Committee, the bishop and the synod staff as together we work to discern God's wisdom for our congregation.

*Call Committee*

### SURVEY RESULTS

#### Areas of most essential need

1. **Worship leadership**
2. **Ministry to youth, young adults**
3. **Preaching**
4. **Teaching youth**
5. **Interpreter of theology**
6. **Evangelism**
7. **Ministering in crisis**
8. **Children's ministry**

## NOTES OF THANKS

**I APPRECIATED** your prayers, cards, gifts, flowers and food. It was nice of you to think of me.

*Diane Lamb*

**I WANT** to thank everyone for the prayers, cards and well wishes, and for helping me celebrate my 85th birthday. It was just great to have many of my family members be here and worship with us on that Sunday.

*Lu Ahrens*

A **SINCERE** thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts and prayers, phone calls, and memorials at the time of my brother's death. Our St. John's family I very important to us all.

*Donna Beck and family*

**THANK YOU** to St. John's for your support of "Crossing for Care." Your gift of \$500 will help many uninsured people in our community receive health care and a better quality of life. Thank you to St. John's members, too, for your prayers and support, and for being such an influential part of my life.

*John Heineman*

**THANK YOU** to everyone who helped with the recent funerals at our church. The families were so appreciative of all the food that was donated and all the work everyone did for the luncheons. In difficult times, our St. John's family always pulls together to help.

*Donna Beck*

A **BIG** thank you to everyone who helped with the outdoor service on August 18. It was attended by about 110 people. The weather was great and so was the food. Thanks everyone.

*Fellowship Committee*

**THANK YOU** so much for the supplies you gave me for college. It will help me out so much.

*Nate Weigel*

**WE WOULD** like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards and kind words of comfort for the loss of our mother, Betty Rolf. It certainly is a blessing to be part of St. John's church family.

*Steve and Pat Gustafson*

## Highlights of council meeting

*Here is a summary of the August meeting of the Church Council*

**Evangelism:** A series of CareNotes—pamphlets on a variety of life issues – have been purchased and are available free in a rack in the elevator entrance. Members are encouraged to take and read any of them—or take one to a friend or family member. A new program called “Cherish the Kids” is under consideration. The program involves members praying for a child in the congregation on a daily basis.



**Stewardship:** The Time and Abilities sheet is being redesigned for use in this year's stewardship program.

**Service:** Council members discussed the “Good Neighbor” program designed to help anyone with unexpected expenses due to medical or other emergency situation. An application form is available in the church office.

## Prayer, support needed

"Shepherding" has been a very important job in our congregation this past month. As you can see from the listing on page 2 of recent deaths in our congregation and in the families of congregation members, we have had many instances where prayer and support have been needed. This is not only a job for the Caring Team, but a time for everyone to offer assistance as needed. It is all part of God's great commission.

## Looking ahead

The CROP Walk to benefit local and international hunger programs will be held in Grinnell on Sunday, **October 7**

Lydia Circle will host the fall meeting of Women of the ELCA (WELCA) on **Thursday, October 11**. A traveling dinner is planned, with the main course served at the home of Peggy Kolin, 2001 Spring St., followed by dessert and a business meeting in the social room at Park Place. Details will be announced in the coming weeks.

## ALTAR GUILD

August 13-September 10 — Julie Beach

Month of September — Dorothy Martinek

September 10-October 8 — Madge Ruchotzke

## OFFERING COUNTERS FOR SEPTEMBER

John and Dorothy Martinek, Russ Schuchmann

## USHERS FOR SEPTEMBER

Bob Ashing, John Martinek (*head ushers*), Duane Flagel, Alec Henderson, Stan Reitz

**STEWARDSHIP OF SERVICE**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1**

**Acolyte:** Kyle Irland  
**Reader:** Pam Ashing

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2**

**Acolyte:** Nathan Ford  
**Greeters:** Larry and Dorothy Wade  
**Reader:** Dorothy Buchmeier  
**Communion Assistants:** Vic and Jean Frana  
**Nursery:** Kalen Winburn  
**Coffee Servers:** Virginia Deppe, Becky Wilson

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8**

**Acolyte:** Kyle Irland  
**Reader:** Karen Klug-Frischmeyer

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**

**Acolyte:** Jimmy Pinkerton  
**Greeters:** Don and Doris Sundell  
**Reader:** Nicole Behrens  
**Nursery:** Nicole Behrens  
**BREAKFAST BRUNCH**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15**

**Acolyte:** Christopher Weir  
**Reader:** Brian Heineman

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16**

**Acolyte:** Kalen Winburn  
**Greeters:** Brian and Nancy Heineman  
**Reader:** Amy Anderson  
**Communion Assistants:** G. and K. Johnson  
**Nursery:** Tammie Van Hamme  
**Coffee Servers:** Youth

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22**

**Acolyte:** Zach Boehmer  
**Reader:** Shirle Huth  
**Communion Assistant:**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23**

**Acolyte:** Scott Bosse  
**Greeters:** John and Made Ruchotzke  
**Reader:** Sara Hagemeister  
**Nursery:** Sara Hagemeister  
**Coffee Servers:** Pam and Bob Ashing

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29**

**Acolyte:** Katelin Dunn  
**Reader:** Ed Hatcher  
**Communion Assistant:** Jim Urfer

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30**

**Acolyte:** Joseph Reitz  
**Greeters:** Natalie Pavey and Lu Ahrens  
**Reader:** Fred Hagemeister  
**Communion Assistants:**  
**Nursery:** Pam Ashing  
**Coffee Servers:** N., B. Heineman, A. Hanson

**CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER**

<b>Sat</b>	<b>1</b>	5:30 pm	Worship
<b>Sun</b>	<b>2</b>	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		9:30 am	Worship with Holy Communion
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
<b>Mon</b>	<b>3</b>	LABOR DAY, church office closed	
<b>Tue</b>	<b>4</b>	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
<b>Wed</b>	<b>5</b>	7 pm	Confirmation Class, with parents, Meeting Room
<b>Sat</b>	<b>8</b>	5:30 pm	Worship
<b>Sun</b>	<b>9</b>	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		8:30 pm	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		9:30 am	Worship with Holy Communion, presentation of Bibles to our third-graders
		10:30 am	Rally Day breakfast brunch
		10:45 am	Start of Sunday School for all ages
<b>Mon</b>	<b>10</b>	11 am	Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room
<b>Tue</b>	<b>11</b>	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
		6:30 pm	Call Committee, Meeting Room
<b>Wed</b>	<b>12</b>	Noon	WELCA board meeting
		1:30 pm	Mary Martha Circle, Lu Ahrens, hostess
		TBA	Confirmation Class, Meeting Room
<b>Sat</b>	<b>15</b>	5:30 pm	Worship
<b>Sun</b>	<b>16</b>	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		8:30 am	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		9:30 am	Worship with Holy Communion
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult
<b>Mon</b>	<b>17</b>	11 am	Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room
		6:30 pm	Call Committee, Meeting Room
<b>Tue</b>	<b>18</b>	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
<b>Wed</b>	<b>19</b>	Noon	Autumn Leaves, Fellowship Hall
		5:30 pm	Church Council, Meeting Room
		TBA	Confirmation Class, Meeting Room
<b>Thurs</b>	<b>20</b>	9:30 am	Lydia Circle, Dorothy Buchmeier, hostess
<b>Sat</b>	<b>22</b>	5:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion
<b>Sun</b>	<b>23</b>	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		8:30 am	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		9:30 am	Worship
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult
<b>Mon</b>	<b>24</b>	11 am	Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room
		6:30 pm	Call Committee, Meeting Room
<b>Tue</b>	<b>25</b>	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
		6 pm	Sarah Circle, West Side Diner
<b>Wed</b>	<b>26</b>	TBA	Confirmation Class, Meeting Room
<b>Fri</b>	<b>28</b>	4-11 pm	Scrapbooking, Fellowship Hall
<b>Sat</b>	<b>29</b>	8 am-5 pm	Scrapbooking, Fellowship Hall
<b>Sat</b>	<b>29</b>	5:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion
<b>Sun</b>	<b>30</b>	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

*More calendar information on page 4.*

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## GRACE MATTERS

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

### SEPTEMBER 2

**Janet Peterman – Ritual Living With a Flair**

*Colossians 3:16-17*

We often speak of rituals as being boring, dull, or even dead. The word ritual is laden with many negative connotations in peoples' minds. But rituals can drive life. They can even restore life. The **Rev. Janet Peterman** believes so thoroughly in their power that she has authored a book of sacred rituals for special moments and crises in life.

### SEPTEMBER 9

**Eboo Patel – The Dangers of Religious Totalitarianism**

*Acts 2:1-21*

If you are tired of trying to make sense of why certain expressions of religion irritate you so thoroughly, you need to meet **Eboo Patel**. Chances are good that what is bothering, or even infuriating you, is what Patel calls "religious totalitarianism." Eboo Patel is an articulate man of faith who is founder and executive director of Interfaith Youth Core – an organization devoted to advancing religious understanding and respect.

### SEPTEMBER 16

**Andrea Jaeger – Holy Laughter**

*Genesis 18:12-1*

Those who follow the tennis world closely know the name **An-**

**drea Jaeger**. In the mid-1980s she was second in the world on the women's pro circuit. That was young Andrea. Following a career ending injury as a teenager, she engaged in a refocus of her life. Today, she is an Anglican Dominican sister who devotes everything she is to kids who live with life-threatening diseases.

### SEPTEMBER 23

**Wayne-Daniel Berard – Retrieving Our Jewishness**

*Mark 6:3*

If Christians are not careful, we have a dangerous tendency to view the Bible as an exclusively Christian book. **Wayne-Daniel Berard**, professor and author, who was born of a Jewish parent and adopted by a Catholic family, calls on Christians to explore "with open heart and mind" the Jewishness, not only of Jesus, but of themselves.

### SEPTEMBER 30

**David Hilfiker – Seeing Into the Eyes of the Poor**

*Deuteronomy 15:1-11*

**David Hilfiker** did what many people think about, but never have the courage to do. He and his family left comfortable living in a rural community to begin a new life in an urban ghetto. Few upper-middle class people understand the plight of the poor quite like this physician. He says the only way to really know what it means to be poor is to look them in the eye and get to know them.