

LOVE LETTER

OCTOBER 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, AIM
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 a 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

Politics from the Pulpit...or not?

"to rebuke rulers is not seditious, provided it is done in the way here described: namely, by the office to which has committed that duty, and through God's Word., boldly and honestly. To rebuke rulers in this way is, on the contrary, a praiseworthy noble and rare virtue, and a particularly great service to God..."

Martin Luther commenting on Psalm 82*

By Pastor Paul Nelson

In recent months, several church members have raised objections to what they perceive as my "bringing politics into the pulpit." The brief mentions in some of my sermons were referring to the war in Iraq and the torture practiced by U.S. personnel there. As with all church disagreements, there is always room for reasonable disagreements and differing perceptions on the issues at hand. None of the words any pastor speaks, including my own, can ever be deemed as "infallible" or the "last word on the subject." Yet, as pastor, I am charged with preaching the Word of God on a weekly basis using the appointed biblical texts as my reference point.

The particular issue, of course, is whether it is appropriate for a pastor as the weekly preacher to address, even in a tangential way, public or political issues in the sermon. I believe that, with due respect and loving regard for those hearing the sermon, it is always appropriate to do so. I think that Martin Luther would agree.

Let me offer what I understand to be Luther's understanding on the relation of church and state or the "preaching on public issues from the pulpit." Luther believed that God works in two separate but very connected ways

in this world. First, God works through what we might call the "secular realm." This realm includes schools, law enforcement and other specifically public and non-church authorities. This realm also includes politics as well.

But second, Luther argued that the other realm of God's care and work was the "sacred realm" of the Church. This realm involves the preaching and teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. And though the first realm would seem to be exclusively the "public realm," we can also view the Church as a "public place." By implication then, preachers may legitimately, though carefully and with respect, address the theological and moral dimensions of public issues from the pulpit as well as in their teaching ministry. For instance, wars, the economy, the environment and other strictly public issues are areas of life that are of legitimate concern to the Church in its preaching and teaching.

The example of Nazi Germany is a cautionary tale of what happens when the Church limits itself to only "private or personal matters." In that instance, the Church in Germany at that time was taken over by the

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AROUND the CONGREGATION

Themes for Worship Services in October

October 6-7 **Hunger**

October 13-14 **Blessing of the Quilts**

October 20-21 **Healing**

October 28 **Reformation Sunday**

and Talents sheets, will be mailed to all members at the end of the month.

Call Committee update

The Call Committee has submitted written materials to the synod office and is now waiting for a list of three candidates to be interviewed for our pastoral position. The committee asks for your continued prayers and support in this important process.

CROP Walk coming up

The annual CROP Walk for Hunger to benefit hunger projects locally as well as worldwide will be held Sunday, October 7, at Ahrens Park. Registration and refreshments will begin at 1 p.m. with the walk starting at 1:45 p.m.

Signup sheets are available at the church. You can either walk yourself, pledge money to support a walker, or make a contribution.

Good food, good fellowship

A traveling dinner for all women of the church will be hosted by Lydia Circle on Thursday, October 11, starting at 6:30 p.m. The main course will be served at the home of Peggy Kolpin, 2001 Spring Street., followed by dessert next door in the social room at Park Place Condominiums, 2005 Spring Street. Signup sheets are posted in the narthex and the Fellowship Hall.

Take one, pass one on

Pamphlets on a wide variety of life issues are available for the taking in racks in the elevator entrance and in the first-floor education wing. Called CareNotes, the pamphlets are meant to offer faith-based insight and support to members of

our congregation. The rack in the elevator entrance contains topics relating to aging. Topics for teens and families can be found in the rack in the education wing. We hope you will look over the titles and take some for yourself and for others.

New group starts

A Grief Support Group will meet from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday evenings for six weeks starting Tuesday, October 2, at the United Church of Christ Congregational, 4th Avenue and Broad Street. It will be facilitated by Grinnell Hospice. To register, call 236-2418.

Remember Rebecca

Rebecca Jasch is celebrating a birthday on October 2. You can send her a card at 125 Sunset Avenue, Farmington, Maine 04938.

Stewardship time

Stewardship is being highlighted this month at St. John's. At worship services on Saturday and Sunday, council members are explaining their committees and how congregation members can get involved. Pledge materials, including Time



Bravo!

The faithful Tuesday Quilters sewed and tied a total of 140 quilts this year. The quilts will be blessed at the worship services on October 13-14, then delivered to Ankeny for shipment to people in need around the world through Lutheran World Relief. (Thanks from Shirley Broders to all who donated fabric.)

Meet with Muriel

The Monday morning Bible study led by Muriel Johannessen is discussing Martin Marty's book, "Faith: Confidence and Doubt in Daily Life." The group meets at 11 a.m. Mondays in the Meeting Room.

Church finances through August 2007

	2007	2006
Offerings	\$109,940	\$112,876
Budget	\$140,846*	\$137,694
Expenses	\$114,384	\$133,848

**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.***

October event

Plans are in the works for a hayride on Sunday, October 21, at an area farm.

Helping out

Immediately after confirmation class on Wednesday, October 17, students are asked to help load boxes of quilts into cars for delivery to the central shipping point for Lutheran World Relief.

Save the date

All youth group members will meet on Sunday, December 2, to shop and wrap gifts for Christmas Shares, the holiday gift program for local families in need

Serving in October

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 October 21 will be Nathaniel Beach, Renee Beach, Alec Henderson, Chana Weir and Christopher Weir. Parent helpers that day are Roger and Lisa Henderson and Craig and Connie Weir.

Good Neighbor Program started

St. John's is reaching out to members of the congregation who are in emergency situations or who have unexpected expenses.

With the approval of the Church Council, the church has started a Good Neighbor Program to assist members — and the immediate family of members — who are in financial need.

The money will come from the church's Disaster/Emergency Fund, an annual budgeted amount that in the past has been used primarily for disaster relief and other worthy causes. The fund will continue to be used for that purpose but will now be expanded to include assistance to congregation members.

The Good Neighbor Program will be handled by a committee headed by a chairperson appointed by the chair of the council's Service Committee. All decisions on allocations will be made by the committee. Under the program's general guidelines, assistance may be made available for emergencies or unexpected expenses not covered by insurance or other sources of income, specifically when the expenses would cause a financial strain on the person or family involved. In all cases, the need is expected to be temporary, not a long-term dependency. Applications for assistance will be available at the church office.

Committee brainstorms ideas

The Evangelism and Shepherding Committee at St. John's has a dual focus — ministering to the needs of the congregation and reaching out into the community. Currently, the new Caring Team is visiting homebound members, and other committee members are telephoning shut-ins and the many members who are hurting at this time.

A brainstorming session last month produced several ideas for ways to reach out into the community. We talked about starting an evening quilting group to help out the Tuesday afternoon quilters in making quilts for Lutheran World Relief. We talked about ways in which our church building could be used by existing community groups or by new groups that would meet new community needs. The county Department of Human Services and Grinnell College will be contacted for additional possibilities. This won't all happen immediately but the goal is for greater involvement in the community.

If anyone is interested in helping with these ideas, your input and prayers would be greatly appreciated! We'd like to get the congregation involved. The committee currently consists of Nancy Locker, Pat Starrett, Mary Schuchmanm, Sue McDonough, and Gaye Van Hamme. Gaye has volunteered to call sick and hurting members to let them know we're thinking of them. Thank you, Gaye!

Sue McDonough

NOTES OF THANKS

Our family owes the St. John's congregation quite a debt for all it has meant to us. If not for St. John's, our family would never have been in Grinnell. When our parents were looking for a central Iowa community to settle in about 50 years ago, Mom chose Grinnell because of the church and the college. The importance of St. John's to us can be seen in that all three of us children have been active church members in the communities where we have lived.



A special thanks to Pastor Paul and Muriel for their visits and support throughout our mother's illness, to the church for hosting the service, and to the volunteers of the church for the lunch they served after the funeral. The food was great and provided a wonderful symbol of the importance of community and faith.

*Jim Strickler
Susan Heider
Dave Strickler*

We wish to thank everyone who shared in our sorrow with thoughts, cards and memorials following the death of Loren's brother, Ken. It meant so much to our family.

Loren and Peggy Kolpin

A sincere thank you to everyone at St. John's for their thoughts and prayers, phone calls and memorials at the time of my mom's death.

Gaye Van Hamme and family

Thank you to everyone who helped prepare and serve food at the Breakfast Brunch on September 9

Fellowship Committee

Highlights of council meeting

Summary of the Church Council meeting held September 19.

Council members heard a report from Russ Crawford on the progress of the Call Committee.

A special offering will be taken on Reformation Sunday to aid the Lutheran Chaplaincy Program on area college campuses.



STEWARDSHIP The Time and Talents sheet is being redesigned to better reflect the current needs of the church.

SERVICE: Council members approved using the church's new "Good Neighbor Program" to provide financial assistance to two families in the congregation who have significant medical expenses and/or other difficulties. In the future, the committee will make decisions on allocation without council approval.

PROPERTIES: Exterior cleaning of the church building to remove mold and mildew has been completed. The boiler inspection has been completed and the fire extinguisher inspection is in progress.

FELLOWSHIP: Approximately 75 people attended the Breakfast Brunch on Rally Day, September 9.

Politics from the Pulpit....or not?

(continued from page 1)

Government because the church did not speak out on public issues.

The long and the short of Luther's thinking is that all of life is under God's care and concern. By implication, the Church is always a "public Church." Any given church leader, including the pastor, always have an important role in the public proclamation of the Gospel. And so, if a particular public issue is in the forefront of people's minds, isn't it incumbent on pastors to address such issues? There will surely be disagreements, even vehement ones at times; yet, if we artificially limit ourselves as a Church to only "private or personal issues," doesn't the Church abandon its public role?

These are my thoughts. I'd like to hear yours.

*In God's peace,
Pastor Paul Nelson*

*Taken from *Luther and Liberation*, by the Rev. Walter Altmann, p. 80, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1992

STEWARDSHIP OF SERVICE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6

Acolyte: Jarren Ford
Reader: Verna Gerrish

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7

Acolyte: Caprisse Honsbruch
Greeters: Tom and Anita Ford
Reader: Peggy Kolpin
Communion Assistants: R. Osland, L. Cline
Nursery: Renee Beach
Coffee Servers: N. Locker, M. Schuchmann

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13

Acolyte: Ashley Mikel
Reader: Ted Urfer

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14

Acolyte: Joe Nowasell
Greeters: Scott and Shirley Jensen
Reader: Sara Hegge Dunne
Nursery: Sarah Dahlby Albright
Coffee Servers: M., D. Dufoe, F. England

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20

Acolyte: Zach Osland
Reader: Bev Hatcher

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21

Acolyte: Breanna Sanders
Greeters: Duane and Mitzi Dufoe
Reader: Jim Urfer
Communion Assistants: Vic and Jean Frana
Nursery: Tammie Van Hamme
Coffee Servers: Senior Youth

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27

Acolyte: Troy Smith
Reader: Dave Huth

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28

Acolyte: Ollie VandeStouwe
Greeters: Vic and Jean Frana
Reader: Michael Schaeffer
Nursery: Shirley Broders
Coffee Servers: Madge and John Ruchotzke

USHERS

Jim Urfer, Fred England (*head ushers*), Norm Erickson, Becky Wilson, Ray Parker

OFFERING COUNTERS

Rick and Kris Stepanek, Fred England

ALTAR GUILD

September 10-October 8 — Madge Ruchotzke
 Month of October — Sue McDonough
 October 8-November 12 — Sara Hegemeister

OCTOBER CALENDAR

Mon	1	11 am	Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room
		6:30 pm	Call Committee, Meeting Room
Tue	2	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
Wed	3	7 pm	Confirmation Class, Meeting Room
		7 pm	Celebration Singers rehearsal
Sat	6	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	7	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
		1 pm	CROP Walk for Hunter, Ahrens Park
Mon	8	11 am	Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room
Tue	9	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
Wed	10	1:30 pm	Mary Martha Circle
		2:30 pm	Caring Team, Meeting Room
		7 pm	Confirmation Class, Meeting Room
		7 pm	Celebration Singers rehearsal
Thurs	11	6:30 pm	WELCA traveling dinner (See page 3)
Sat	13	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	14	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		9:30 am	Worship with Holy Communion
		10:45 am	Sunday School for all ages
Mon	15	11 am	Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room
Tue	16	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
		7 pm	Sarah Circle, Donna Beck, hostess
Wed	17	Noon	Autumn Leaves
		7 pm	Confirmation Class, Meeting Room
		7 pm	Celebration Singers rehearsal
Thurs	18	9:30 am	Lydia Circle, Rosalie Hartzell, hostess
Sat	20	5:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion
Sun	21	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
		TBA	Youth group hayride
Mon	22	11 am	Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room
Tue	23	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
Wed	24	7 pm	Confirmation Class, Meeting Room
		7 pm	Celebration Singers rehearsal
Sat	27	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	28	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		8:30 am	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		9:30 am	Worship, Reformation Sunday
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult
Mon	29	11 am	Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room
Tue	30	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	Quilt Making, Quilt Room
		5:30 pm	Community Meal, Davis School
Wed	31	7 pm	Confirmation Class, Meeting Room

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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

OCTOBER 7

Sarah Henrich – Five Keys of Discipleship

Luke 9:57-62

Discipleship is either a meaningful word or a "churchy" word that is tired and overused. In this program, host Peter W. Marty explores the meaning of discipleship with **Sarah Henrich**, a professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. Her rich insights on discipleship, and Peter's five keys for making it a part of everyday life, add up to a memorable program/.

OCTOBER 14

Dave Dravecky – Hope Born of Adversity

2 Corinthians 6:4-5

Life is difficult. Being human is hazardous to your health. Christianity is no ticket to a "Get Out of Jail Free" card. So what do we make of the hazards of living and of suffering? **Dave Dravecky**, former all-star pitcher in the major leagues, is as well positioned as anyone to speak powerfully on how to give birth to hope in adverse times. After an encounter with cancer at the peak of his career, he lost his throwing arm and shoulder to amputation, but gained a whole new world of faith through the experience.

OCTOBER 21

Doris Christopher – Table Talk

Matthew 9:10

One would not expect a prominent CEO of a global firm to weigh in on the importance of mealtime and talk around the dinner table, but **Doris Christopher** is not your average corporate leader. Founder of the kitchen tools company Pampered Chef, Christopher maintains a rigorous schedule and a high demand for excellence. In the midst of it all, she has never forgotten the place of the Lord in her everyday life.

OCTOBER 28

Francis Collins – Faith in Science, Faith in God

Genesis 1

Among the top tier of scientists in the world, there is **Francis Collins**. Longtime director of the human genome project that has mapped over 3 billion letters of the human genetic code, Collins is an articulate spokesperson for the glories of science. But he is also a person of deep faith who is not shy to speak about the place of God in biological science. Repudiating both anti-scientific thinking and shallow spirituality, Collins offers a clear-headed way for understanding the beauty of how science enhances one's reading of the Bible.