

LOVE LETTER

NOVEMBER 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

No Noose Is Good News? or Giving Thanks that Everyone Gets Heard

"now I speak this word for your own profit, and not that a noose may be put on you. But I speak with respect to what is proper and a constant service to the Lord in an undistracted way."
1Corinthians 7:35

Last month, borrowing Martin Luther's wisdom, I reflected on the place of politics in the Christian pulpit. My prayer is that those thoughts have helped bring clarity to the issue. This month, with the help of Lutheran bible scholar, David Fredrickson, I offer some of the Apostle Paul's thoughts on Christian leadership and how its practice can give us a perspective of thankfulness which is so important in our daily living out of the Christian faith (see quote above).

There has been some internal turmoil at St. John's in recent weeks, that's true. However, with the recent responsible and ongoing conversations and actions carried out by St. John's Council of Ministers, the exercise of these "multiple voices" of the membership have been "let loose" so that mission and ministry can blossom from St. John's for the benefit of the larger community. A wonderful gift for the soon-be-interviewed candidates --- one of whom will become your new pastor --- would be to become the pastor of a congregation that has dealt in a positive way with its unhealthy divisions and "whispering in the corners." St. John's leadership has begun to "unloose the noose" for ministry creativity. The multiple and grace-filled gifts of all of St. John's members can therefore blossom as a result of the Council's leadership.



In his letter to the Corinthian church, St. Paul was addressing a situation in which some members were rated as having an "important voice" that all must hear while still others had a "less important voice." From what we know historically, the disputes (and there were many !?) were contentious, divisive and not always handled honestly and openly by the church leaders. Not to put too fine a point on it, there were power struggles and "whispering in the corners." All of which served to "noose" the healthy exercise of the church's mission and ministry.

Who gets to speak and in what manner was a critical issue for those Corinthian Christians. It's why Paul's metaphor of a "noose" is right on target. "Unloosing the noose" is what Paul sought to lead the Corinthians to do. All "voices" need to be heard. In Corinth, addressing the difficulties of "noosing some voices" harmed its mission and ministry; "loosing them" did wonders for advancing God's Spirit and work. When this "un-noosing" that Paul is talking about happens, then all Christians can be thankful. For in the "un-noosing," the freedom of the spirit can be given its fullest expression.

Happy Thanksgiving!
Pastor Paul Nelson



AROUND the CONGREGATION

World Community Day

World Community Day will be celebrated in Grinnell on Friday, November 2, at noon at St. Mary's Catholic Church.

The annual communitywide worship service is sponsored by Church Women United and focuses on justice and peace in a global society.

The theme of this year's service is "Embracing Justice Under God's Tent." The liturgy will address issues of peace and justice, especially immigration. Nora Dvorak, former director of refugee resettlement for the Diocese of Davenport, will be the speaker.

A light lunch will be served in the church basement immediately after the service. All are welcome to attend the event.

Keys out there?

If you have a key to the church office and no longer have need for it, please return it to the office.

Help needed

Can you spare an hour on Sunday morning during the Sunday School hour to assist in the preschool class? We've got a lively bunch, and another adult would be helpful. Just show up when you can. You'll have a rewarding time!

Church finances through September

| | 2007 | 2006 |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Offerings | \$125,903 | \$125,855 |
| Budget | \$158,452 | \$182,704* |
| Expenses | \$127,598 | \$151,358 |

*The 2006 budget included money for a youth director.

The more, the tastier

A chili dump is planned for 6:30 p.m. Saturday, November 10, in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a batch of your favorite recipe and we'll mix it with the contributions of others. Beverages, crackers and relishes will be provided.

Wheels needed

A member of St. John's is without a vehicle and needs a reliable car to get to work, doctor's appointments, and so on. If you know of a low-cost used vehicle, please contact the church office with information.

Service Committee

Stewardship

Stewardship materials are being mailed to all congregation members. The materials include Time and Talent sheets as well as pledge forms.



648 pounds!

That's the weight of 160 quilts made this year by the Tuesday Quilters. Members of the confirmation class know that well, since they loaded the quilts (packed in 36 bulky boxes) onto a pickup truck last month for delivery to the shipping point for Lutheran World Relief. Health kits and school kits prepared by church circle members were also sent. Thanks to the

Thanksgiving at St. John's

For the 21st year, St. John's will host a community Thanksgiving dinner—at noon on Thanksgiving Day. Food and volunteers are needed. Sign up on the forms included in the worship bulletins or call the church office.

A special Thanksgiving Day worship service will be held at St. John's at 10:30 a.m. that day.

quilters for their faithful service and to the youth for their heavy lifting.

Fill the shelves

Families in need typically struggle more during the winter months, when utility and heating bills mount up. The MICA Food Pantry is in need this month of many of the basics, especially canned peaches, boxed potatoes, refried beans, dish-washing soap and toilet tissue. A collection box at St. John's is located in the narthex.

Scrapbooking scheduled

Scrapbooking sessions will be held in the Fellowship Hall at St. John's from 5 p.m. to midnight on Friday, November 16, and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, November 17. You can bring your own supplies or purchase Creative Memories materials. For more information, call Stephanie Morrison at 515-201-3766 or Becky Pinkerton at 641-990-4597.

St. John's Youth Ministry

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

Thank you X4

TO all who helped with Kids Against Hunger in September. We hope to make this an annual event.

TO the Mikel and Osland families for hosting the hayride in October.

TO Don and Doris Sundell for donating a TV to the youth room.

TO the 7th- and 8th-graders for loading the many boxes of quilts. Many hands made light work!

Serving in November

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 November will be Sarah Reitz, Joseph Reitz, Troy Smith, Eli Dunne and Katelin Dunne. Parent helpers are Jim and Sara Hegg-Dunne and Stan and Tracy Reitz..

Coming up

The youth at St. John's will once again sponsor a family through the Christmas Shares program. Members of all three youth groups (grades 5-12) will meet at the church at 11:45 a.m. Sunday, December 2 (after Sunday School), to shop locally for gifts for the family, then return to the church to wrap the gifts and share some pizza.

Amy Anderson

Call Committee update

The Call Committee is in the process of scheduling interviews with three candidates submitted to us by the Synod office. The committee will interview all three candidates, then conduct prayerful review. Under the Synod guidelines for the call process, the committee makes a recommendation on a candidate to the Church Council and the council, in turn, presents the recommended candidate to the congregation, which takes a vote to issue a call. After a favorable vote, a candidate has 30 days to respond to the call.

As always, the Call Committee asks for your prayers and support as it seeks to carry out God's will for our congregation. While the interview and review phases of the call process are confidential and cannot be discussed outside committee meetings, the Call Committee continues to welcome your thoughts about the future of St. John's.

Evangelism Committee news

The Caring Team is continuing its monthly visitation of homebound members and is meeting every other month as a group to learn how to minister to those in need. As part of that training, Pastor Paul is leading us in a study of how to deal with death, dying, and grief — a very helpful topic at this time in our congregation. (A similar class is being offered at the adult Sunday School class.)



We urge you to take and read the CareNotes – small booklets dealing with a variety of life issues. Booklets related to aging and loss can be found in a rack in the elevator entryway. Booklets designed for youth and families are in the parish education hallway by the north entryway. Take one or more for yourself and for anyone you know who could benefit from faith-based words of wisdom and comfort.

I've talked to a couple people in Grinnell with Lutheran backgrounds, telling them about our services and inviting them to attend our church. So ----- I implore everyone to greet and be friendly to any strangers you may see in church. Shake their hand, introduce yourself, ask them their names, where they live, work, invite them down to coffee, etc. Let them know that you are truly interested in them and that they are welcome in our church. Please. This is God's plan for us — to be ambassadors of Christ.

*Sue McDonough
Evangelism Committee*

NOTES OF THANKS

WE wish to thank our friends at St. John's for all your acts of kindness these past two difficult months. A special thank you goes out to the Celebration Singers for singing at Doug's service, to Jack for carrying the St. John's cross, and to the people who provided and served the meal after the funeral. A sincere thank you, too, to Pastor Paul and Muriel for their prayers and support as we journey down this unfamiliar path.



Words cannot describe how grateful we were that you volunteered to feed all the people at our harvest on October 10. The food was wonderful, and the meal provided the farm helpers with a time to visit. It meant a great deal to the four of us to focus on the importance of community and faith on that special day. We feel truly blessed to be part of this church family.

Brenda, Brandon, Ashley and Mariah Mikel

THANK YOU for remembering me on my birthday and for keeping Anna and me in your prayers. You are all in my daily prayers.

Anna is finding the Peace Corps to be "the toughest job she has ever loved." She hasn't been able to figure out the postal system in Georgia yet, but she says hello to you all. Her email address is aljasch@gmail.com

Right now I have two part-time jobs—one substituting in the public schools and one with home health. Already I'm getting caught up in the business of a new life, but I will always remember the lessons learned during our days together at St. John's. It seems like each church has its favorite hymns and these hymns say a lot about the church. The hymn I miss most is "Love Grows Here." I believe the hymn says so much about St. John's. We as humans can never fully understand God's love, but if we act in love it must be the right thing. Thank you for being messengers of God's love to me.

*In Christ,
Rebecca Jasch*

NOTE: Anna has created a blog at gogosakartveloshi.blogspot.com Mail can be sent to her at Anna Jasch, US Peace Corps, PO Box 66, Tbilisi, 0194, Republic of Georgia.

WE would like to thank the church and Jo Olson for letting us use the Fellowship Hall on September 30 for Ashley Kramer's bridal shower.

*Lorraine Graff
Arlene Davenport
Diane Beeler*

Church Council highlights

Summary of the meeting held October 17.

Alliant Energy has completed an audit of the building.

Pastor Nelson is conducting a study on death and grieving for the adult Sunday School class on Sunday mornings.

The Stewardship Committee's temple talks are nearing completion. Stewardship letters will go out in November.

St. John's will once again participate in Christmas Shares, a holiday gift program for families in need in our community.

Council members voted to sponsor Pastor Nelson in a pension and benefit plan for medical coverage..

Kids Against Hunger

A group of St. John's volunteers, ages 6 and up, joined other community groups pm September 30 for the fifth Kids Against Hunger, a volunteer effort to package food for hungry people in Tanzania, Liberia and Guatemala.

Each team of 12 is asked to contribute money to cover the cost of food, supplies and shipping. St. John's was fortunate to receive a general donation from Howard and Sue McDonough to field one team. A second team was sponsored by the Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation,

Amy Anderson and Stephanie Nelson, the education leaders at St. John's, hope to make this an annual event for our church and want to thank those who participated this year: Mike, Amy, Barrett and Sydney Anderson, Nicole Behrens, Fred and Lauren Hagemester, Caprise Honsbruch, Dale and Jacob Lamb, Brenda, Brandon, Ashley and Mariah Mikel, Stephanie, Thad and Nate Nelson, Rick, Kris, Nick and Josh Stepanek, Luann and Laura Weigel and Chelsey Rilatos.



Volunteers of all ages help package food in the Kids Against Hunger program in Grinnell.

STEWARDSHIP OF SERVICE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Acolyte: Zach Boehmer
Reader: Nancy Heineman

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Acolyte: Scott Bosse
Greeters: Russ and Nicole Behrens
Reader: Dorothy Wade
Communion Assistants: Bob and Pam Ashing
Nursery: Laura Weigel
Coffee Servers: Brenda Mikel, Becky Wilson

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10

Acolyte: Katelin Dunne
Reader: Sue McDonough

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11

Acolyte: Joseph Reitz
Greeters: Keith and Rose Osland
Reader: Fred Hegemeister
Nursery: Kelly Rose
Coffee Servers: S., T. Nelson, A., M. Anderson

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17

Acolyte: Jarren Ford
Reader: Molly Urfer
Communion Assutant: Bob Falck

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18

Acolyte: Caprise Honsbruch
Greeters: Norm Erickson
Reader: Kathy Johnson
Communion Assistants: Jim and Sara Dunne
Nursery: Tammie Van Hamme
Coffee Servers: Junior Youth

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24

Acolyte: Ashley Mikel
Reader: Gladys Booth

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25

Acolyte: Joe Nowasell
Greeters: Sue McDonough, Alice Beck
Reader: Verna Gerrish
Nursery: Kalen Winburn
Coffee Servers: Diane and Aaron Winburn

USHERS

Everett Gerrish, Dale Selix (*head ushers*), Jim Dunne, Sara Dunne, Brandon Mikel

OFFERING COUNTERS

Mike Schaeffer, Dave and Shirle Huth

ALTAR GUILD

October 8-November 12 — Sara Hegemeister
 Month of November — Brenda Crawford
 November 12-December 10 — Brenda Mikel and Connie Weir

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------|----------|---|
| Fri | 2 | Noon | World Community Day event (See page 2) |
| Sat | 3 | 5:30 pm | Worship |
| Sun | 4 | 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 |
| Mon | 5 | 11 am | Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room |
| | | 7 pm | Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall |
| Tue | 6 | 7 am | Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner |
| | | 1 pm | Quilt Making, Quilt Room |
| Wed | 7 | 7 pm | Confirmation Class, Meeting Room |
| | | 7 pm | Celebration Singers rehearsal |
| Sat | 10 | 5:30 pm | Worship |
| | | 6:30 pm | Chili dump after worship, Fellowship Hall |
| Sun | 11 | 7:30 am | Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM |
| | | 9:30 am | Worship |
| | | 10:30 am | Coffee Fellowship |
| | | 10:45 am | Sunday School, Preschool to Adult |
| Mon | 12 | 11 am | Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room |
| | | 7 pm | Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall |
| Tue | 13 | 7 am | Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner |
| | | 1 pm | Quilt Making, Quilt Room |
| Wed | 14 | 1:30 pm | Mary Martha Circle |
| | | 7 pm | Confirmation Class, Meeting Room |
| | | 7 pm | Celebration Singers rehearsal |
| Thurs | 15 | 9:30 am | Lydia Circle, Mary Schuchmann, hostess |
| Sat | 17 | 5:30 pm | Worship with Holy Communion |
| Sun | 18 | 7:30 am | Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM |
| | | 9:30 am | Worship with Holy Communion |
| | | 10:45 am | Sunday School, Preschool to Adult |
| | | 5 pm | Community Musicale, Community Center Theater |
| Mon | 19 | 11 am | Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room |
| | | 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 |
| Thurs | 22 | 10:30 am | Thanksgiving Day worship service |
| | | Noon | Community Thanksgiving dinner |
| Sat | 24 | 5:30 pm | Worship with Holy Communion |
| Sun | 25 | 7:30 am | Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM |
| | | 9:30 am | Worship |
| | | 10:30 am | Coffee Fellowship |
| | | 10:45 am | Sunday School, Preschool to Adult |
| Mon | 26 | 11 am | Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room |
| | | 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 | 7 pm | Confirmation Class, Meeting Room |
| | | 5:30 pm | Church Council, Meeting Room |
| | | 7 pm | Confirmation Class with mentors, Meeting Room |
| | | 7 pm | Celebration Singers rehearsal |

Pastor Nelson will be visiting family at Thanksgiving and so will be gone from November 20-24. For pastoral care during that time, please contact Muriel Johannessen at 641-791-1044. Muriel will lead worship on Thanksgiving Day.

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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

NOVEMBER 4

Chap Clark – Encouraging Teens Along Life's Way

1 Thessalonians 2:6-11

Parenting adolescents is becoming a more challenging task with every generation -- or so it seems. Cultural and technological forces are complicating every parent's assignment of raising wholesome kids who live meaningful lives. **Chap Clark**, professor of youth, family and culture at Fuller Theological Seminary, has some very astute insights about parenting and kids. His ultimate goal is for every teenager to receive enough guidance and encouragement to know how extraordinary the love of God is.

NOVEMBER 11

The Faith Club (Part I) – The Limits of Tolerance

John 13:35

For all the religiosity in America, it is a surprisingly ignorant republic when it comes to understanding religion. Faithful people are quickly at home with their own tradition, but with little else. Three women set about to change this. Meeting in each other's homes on a weekly basis for several years, Ranya Idilby (a Palestinian-born Muslim), Suzanne Oliver (an Episcopal Christian), and Priscilla Warner (a Reform Jew) covered all sorts of topics, including the limitations of merely tolerating one another.

NOVEMBER 18

The Faith Club (Part II) – Friendship and Candor

John 15:14-15

Frankness of speech, spoken in love, is one of many components that can allow for true friendship to flourish. In this second of a two-part series, host Peter W. Marty explores the topic of friendship, following more conversation with the three women of **The Faith Club**. The three visit about their experience of wrestling with, and growing from, stimulating inter-faith discussions they cultivated in their lives. Lifelong friendship among them became one of the lasting benefits of these candid conversations.

NOVEMBER 25

Peter W. Marty – Thanks. Giving

In a first-ever call-in program to Grace Matters, host Peter W. Marty and program producer Susan Greeley visit about the necessity of grace in a hurting world. They share conversation about the important role this listener-supported program plays in the lives of people across America. Listeners are invited to tune in with their hearts and to call in with their prayers and supportive gifts on this special Thanksgiving weekend program.