

St. John's Lutheran Church, Grinnell, IA

LOVE LETTER

DECEMBER 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

A dawning of God's spirit in our world

"...you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to awake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light..."

Romans 13:11,12

In this season of Advent and Christmas, are you hopeful? For yourself and your family? For the future of St. John's?

Taking a larger view, are you anxious about the future of the global economy that affects all of our lives? Concerned about the seemingly, never-ending spike in gas prices? How about the housing market going down? The stock market that gyrates up and down? Are personal losses or painful separations gnawing at you?

With St. Paul, though, can we commit to "put(ting) on the armor of light?" To allowing ourselves --- in spite of all the anxiety-producing "stuff" --- to be renewed in body and spirit for the work of sharing Advent comfort and Christmas joy in ways that don't let it all end when all the decorations come down after the

holidays? The hope-filled promise that St. Paul points us to is that God's Spirit again dawns into our lives and world if we but calm our busy selves and open our yearning

spirits to God's

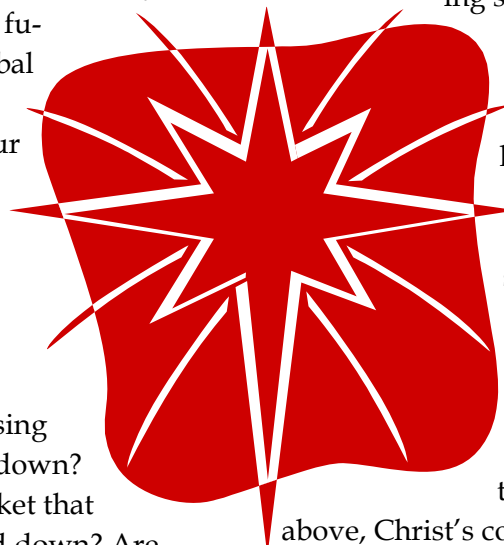
Spirit which is ever available to us. We can know and trust that Christ's coming this season will be a hope-filled event that energizes our lives.

Indeed, in the text I quoted

above, Christ's coming is a call for the renewal of our efforts to work with God's Spirit to bring Christmas cheer and comfort to all this year. 'Tis the season, again, friends! May God refresh and renew our spirits, that St. John's might continue its efforts at reaching out and welcoming all with Christmas joy and holy comfort.

Wishing you rest and fulfillment,

Pastor Paul Nelson





**AROUND
the
CONGREGATION**

Advent and Christmas at St. John's

MIDWEEK WORSHIP

Midweek Advent services are planned for the three Wednesdays in Advent—**December 5, 12 and 19**. The **7 p.m.** worship service each Wednesday will be preceded by a soup supper starting at **6 p.m.** The liturgy on December 5 and 12 will be Marty Haugen's beautiful Holden Evening Prayer. On December 19 the sanctuary will be decorated and a special liturgy used. The 45-minute Advent services offer a time for prayer and quiet reflection in the midst of what can be a hectic holiday season.



SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

The annual Sunday School program will be held during 9:30 a.m. worship on **Sunday, December 9**. There will be no Sunday School on **December 23 or December 30**.

CHRISTMAS EVE

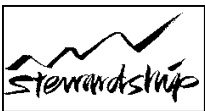
The candlelight service on Christmas Eve will be held at **7 p.m.** It will feature Scripture, carols and special choir music.

Call Committee update

The Call Committee continues in the interview process, with a second interview scheduled for December 3 with one of the three candidates who visited in early November. The committee asks for your continued prayers and support.

Stewardship

Please return your Time and Talent sheets as soon as possible so that planning can begin for 2008. In a



change from previous years, the Stewardship Committee is **not** asking congregation members to fill out and return a pledge card, but to fill out the commitment form provided in the stewardship mailing

and place it with your weekly envelopes as a reminder. **Do** return the Time and Talent sheet, however. Your gifts of yourself are vital to the ministry of our congregation.

Christmas Shares

Wrapped gifts for the Christmas Shares program are to be returned to the church by Sunday, December 9. A table in the Fellowship Hall is set up for the gifts. Christmas Shares, sponsored by Second Mile, provides gifts to those in need in our community.

Caring Team

If you know of a homebound member of our congregation who could benefit from regular visits from a member of the Caring Team, please

contact the church office. Lay visitors can also offer a brief service of Holy Communion if desired. In addition, audio tapes of the Sunday service can be delivered to those unable to attend worship.

Community Meal

St. John's took a turn serving the weekly Community Meal on October 30 at Davis School. The meal, which was started and continues to be organized by a student group at Grinnell College, is designed to bring together all those in Grinnell seeking fellowship and a nutritious meal.

Our menu included meatloaf, macaroni and cheese, green beans, applesauce, cookies. In total, we served approximately 120 people.

Thanks to all those at St. John's who helped. A total of 11 people baked cookies, 5 people prepared the food, 12 people served and cleaned up, and 3 people made monetary donations.

We hope to make this an annual event for St. John's.

Service Committee

Going, going....

Any dishes left in the kitchen at the end of the year will be auctioned off at the WELCA quarterly meeting on January 19. (There may be some great bargains!)

Church finances through October

	2007	2006
Offerings	\$138,769	\$144,015
Budget	\$176,058	\$203,004*
Expenses	\$144,444	\$160,150

**The 2006 budget included money for a youth director.*

St. John's Youth Ministry

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

Serving in December

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 December 16 will be A.J. Baker, Trent Baker, Morgan Boehmer, Zen Masuku and Brandon Mikel. Parent helpers that day are Tami Ditzler and Brenda Mikel.

The Sharing spirit

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.



Coming up

A bowling party is scheduled for Sunday, January 20. Youth group members will serve the meal preceding the Ash Wednesday service on Wednesday, February 6, and at the Easter Breakfast on Sunday, March 23. Plans are also in the works for joint events with the youth of the United Methodist Church. Any adult willing to help with the Ash Wednesday or Easter Sunday events, please contact Amy Anderson.

A noteworthy celebration

Margaret Amo, long-time organist at St. John's, will be honored at the worship service on Sunday, December 23. This is not a retirement event (although Margaret says she does not intend to be "organist for life"), but rather a recognition of her faithful service to St. John's for more than 40 years.

The December 23 date was selected so that Margaret's three children and their families can be present.

Margaret started playing the organ at St. John's in 1964, when then-organist Doris Nothnagel asked Margaret to play an occasional Sunday to give her a break from the every-Sunday responsibility. Doris offered to help Margaret with such things as pedal technique, registration and other skills. "Little did she know how much her help would be needed," Margaret recalls.



Gradually Margaret began to play more frequently for worship. After a while, she and Doris shared the organ duties equally. When Doris and her family moved away, Chuck Hoogland was there to take her place. When the Hooglands left Grinnell, Margaret was on her own for a few years until Pat Shaw entered the picture. When Pat went to seminary, Margaret was again the church's sole organist.

In 1999, Cheryl Irland and her family moved to Grinnell, and Cheryl and Margaret began sharing the job. In 2004, Carolyn Bosse was added to the organist team.

Margaret says, "I thank the congregation for putting up with me through all of my messing up. I feel truly blessed to have been able to serve St. John's all these years."

Please join in the December 23 celebration of Margaret's abilities, commitment and dedication to our church.

Church Council highlights

The following is a summary of the Church Council meeting held November 28. The next council meeting is December 19.

SERVICE: Recent community activities have included the Crop Walk, Community Meal, Thanksgiving Dinner and Christmas Shares.

EVANGELISM: The committee is mailing a CareNotes pamphlet on the topic of grief and the holidays to church members who have experienced a loss in recent months.

PROPERTIES: Fire extinguishers and batteries for emergency lights are being examined and replaced as needed.

NOTES OF THANKS

MANY thanks to all who sent cards, words of encouragement, and prayers during my recent surgery. The outcome was the best possible and I'm back home in Urbandale, doing well. Your support was like a big hug to help me through a tough time. I, and my folks, truly appreciated it.



Wendy Gerrish

Dear St. John's,
Your meal was great! Everyone really enjoyed it. That was great meatloaf and mac and cheese. We hope your group had a fun time serving and will consider doing it again. Thanks.

*Sarah, Ben and Amy
(Grinnell College students in
charge of the Community Meal)*

Dear Friends in Christ,
The "Celebrating HIS Season" musicale held on November was a great success. Thanks to the musical talents of 11 area congregations, you helped raise \$400 for Christmas Shares. Over 300 were in attendance for the 90-minute show. Please pass on a sincere thank you to all involved.

K.C. Cornish

The St. John's Celebration Singers were among the 12 musical groups involved.

MANY thanks for the food donations, financial contributions and help on the day of the community Thanksgiving Day dinner at St. John's.

Don and Doris Sundell

Thank you, Don and Doris, for your faithful leadership over the past 21 years.



From the Bishop

"I thank my God every time I remember you."

Philippians 1:3

As I consider our ministry in our Southeastern Iowa Synod, those words of the Apostle Paul come to mind. As I think of the many ways that we partner in ministry, I give thanks to God. I am grateful for the many ways that your congregation proclaims the gospel in your community.

For ministry together in our Southeastern Iowa Synod, I have suggested four emphases through which we can make a difference in the lives of people. These emphases are:

- Proclaim the Gospel
- Make disciples
- Feed the hungry
- Take care of the children

Because of your generous gifts of mission support, we are able to be about these ministry emphases and partner in ministry with agencies and institutions such as Lutheran Services of Iowa, Campus Ministry, ELCA colleges and seminaries. We also partner in ministry with the other 64 synods and about 16,600 congregations in our ELCA. Through our life and ministry together, as we the love of Christ is proclaimed, we are making a difference in the lives of people.

I would like to invite God's people at St. John's Lutheran Church to prayerfully consider growing your gift of Mission Support to \$32,157 for 2008. This reflects an increase of \$957, or 1/2 or 1 percent of your regular congregational income of \$191,369 reported on your 2006 Congregational Report form.

Thank you for prayerfully considering this invitation to grow in Mission Support for 2008. Thank you, too, for your past generosity. You are great partners in mission.

*Philip J. Hougen, Bishop
Southeastern Iowa Synod*

Stewardship of Service

(continued from page 5)

USHERS: Ken Pearce, Brian Brown (*head ushers*), Aaron Wade, Larry Wade, Mike Olson, Tammie Van Hamme

MONEY COUNTERS: Madge and John Ruchotzke, Lance and Deb Longman

ALTAR GUILD

November 12-December 10 — Brenda Mikel, Connie Weir

Month of December — Donna Beck

December 10-January 14 — Shirley Jensen

STEWARDSHIP OF SERVICE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1

Acolyte: Zach Osland

Reader: Gary Cook

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2

Acolyte: Breanna Sanders

Greeters: Jack and Marian Templeton

Reader: Sue McDonough

Communion Assistants: F. England, H. Honsbruch

Nursery: Nicole Behrens

Coffee Servers: F.S. Hagemeister, M., E. Olson

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5

Acolyte: Troy Smith

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8

Acolyte: Ollie Vandestouwe

Reader: Karen Ashby

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9

Acolyte: Scott Bosse

Greeters: Dave and Shirle Huth

Reader: Margaret Amo

Nursery: Sara Hagemeister

Coffee Servers: D., D. Sundell, F., V. Dillon

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12

Acolyte: Zach Boehmer

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15

Acolyte: Katelin Dunn

Reader: Sandy Falck

Communion Assstant: Bob Falck

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16

Acolyte: Joe Reitz

Greeters: Fred and Sara Hagemeister

Reader: Sara Hagemeister

Communion Assistants: Fred and Vicki Dillon

Nursery: Pam Ashing

Coffee Servers: Senior Youth

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19

Acolyte: Jarren Ford

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

Acolyte: Caprise Honsbruch

Reader: Ed Hatcher

Communion: Bev Hatcher

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23

Acolyte: Ashley Mikel

Greeters: Terry and Lynn Cline

Reader: Gaylen Johnson

Nursery: Renee Beach

Coffee Servers: D., L. Wade, V. Gerrish

CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24

Acolyte: Joe Nowasell

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29

Acolyte: Zach Osland

Reader: Pat Starret

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30

Acolyte: Breanna Sanders

Greeters: Everett and Verma Gerrish

Reader: Pam Ashing

Communion Assistants: Pam and Bob Ashing

Nursery: Shirley Broders

Coffee Servers: T., L. Cline, M. Amo

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sat	1	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	2	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	3	11 am	Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room
		6 pm	Call Committee, Meeting Room
		6:30 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
Tue	4	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	LWR Quilters, Room 9
Wed	5	6 pm	Soup supper
		6:30 pm	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		7 pm	Advent worship
Sat	8	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	9	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		9:30 am	Sunday School program
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult
Mon	10	11 am	Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room
		6:30 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
Tue	11	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	LWR Quilters, Room 9
Wed	12	1:30 pm	Mary Martha Circle, Jo Olson, hostess
		6 pm	Soup Supper
		6:30 pm	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		7 pm	Advent worship
Sat	15	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	16	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		8:30 am	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		9:30 am	Worship with Holy Communion
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult
Mon	17	11 am	Bible Study with Muriel, Meeting Room
		6:30 pm	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
Tue	18	7 am	Men's Breakfast, Westside Diner
		1 pm	LWR Quilters, Room 9
Wed	19	Noon	Autumn Leaves, Fellowship Hall
		6 pm	Soup Supper
		6:30 pm	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		7 pm	Advent worship
		8 pm	Council meeting, Meeting Room
Thurs`	20	9:30 am	Lydia Circle, Verna Gerrish, hostess
Sat	22	5:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion
Sun	23	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		8:30 am	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		9:30 am	Worship, Margaret Amo honored
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship
Mon	24	6:30 pm	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		7 pm	Christmas Eve worship service
Tue	25	CHRISTMAS DAY	
Sat	29	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	30	7:30 am	Grace Matters, KGRN 1410 AM
		9:30 am	Worship
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship

Additional Stewardship of Service information can be found on page 4.

LOVE LETTER

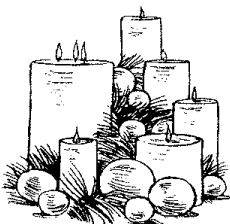
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LOVE LETTER is published monthly by St. John's Lutheran Church. Deadline for each issue is the 20th of the previous month.

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

DECEMBER 2

Waiting: Who's Waiting for Whom?

2 Peter 3:8-15

In this first of a four-part Advent series on WAITING, host Peter W. Marty explores how lousy we can be at waiting. Through an often overlooked passage of the Bible, Marty reminds us of an important key to growing our own patience in life -- recognizing how much other people and God wait upon us.

DECEMBER 9

Waiting: With Great Anticipation

2 James 5:7-10

Pastor Marty talks about waiting that involves a goal. Some of our waiting is impatient because we know there may be unwelcome news coming our way, but some of our waiting is packed with anticipation because we know there is a lively goal or a promise attached to the end of the wait. This makes all the difference in the world, especially for those who follow Jesus Christ.

DECEMBER 16

Waiting: The Politics of It

Luke 18:1-8

Pastor Marty reveals a kind of waiting that does not deserve to have patience attached to it. This is the waiting for justice and

righteousness for the world's dispossessed. Drawing on stories from a Biblical widow to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Marty argues persuasively for a form of Christian waiting that cannot afford to be too patient or passive.

DECEMBER 23

Waiting: Expectant and on Tiptoes

Luke 1:39-45

Envisioning the anticipation of a gift that stretches beyond its contents, Pastor Marty pictures the truest form of waiting as something that will embrace us, hold us, and help us make sense of our lives. Through a touching story of a mother who understands the character of a God-With-Us love, this edition of Grace Matters will inspire Christmas joy in you.

DECEMBER 30

New Beginnings

Luke 15:11-32

For this end-of-the-year program, the focus is on the new beginnings that comes to our lives when grace is bestowed on us. Enjoy a New Year interview with guest, Jerry Evenrud, a retired church musician who explores the inexhaustible riches of the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke's Gospel, which none of us can escape appreciating.