

St. John's Lutheran Church, Grinnell, IA

# LOVE LETTER

DECEMBER 2008

St. John's Lutheran Church  
ELCA  
1224 East Street  
Grinnell, IA 50112  
(641) 236-4946  
stjohngr@iowatelecom.net  
www.stjohngrinnell.org

The Rev. Kathryn Roys, pastor  
pastorkathy@iowatelecom.net

Muriel Johannessen,  
Associate in Ministry  
muriel@iowatelecom.net

## WORSHIP

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

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

10:45 a.m. Sunday, preschool  
through Adult Forum

## OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday  
8 a.m. to noon. At other times,  
leave a message at the office,  
236-4946

## COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Bob Falck, president  
Nancy Heineman, vice president  
Bev Cook, secretary  
Gary Cook, treasurer  
Dan Huebner, Properties  
Donna Beck, Stewardship  
Kelly Rose, Education  
Lisa Henderson, Worship,  
Music, Arts  
Bobbie Kahler, Fellowship  
Mike Schaeffer, Service  
Sue McDonough, Evangelism  
Amy Anderson, Youth

FROM PASTOR KATHY

## Preparing for Jesus

How is it that our celebration of Christ's Incarnation came to be the major supplier of retail stores' profits? What might our families do to celebrate Christmas as a holy day? What can we do to help our children not only hear that we have a different understanding about this holy time but also *enjoy* being different in our celebration of it?

"Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. **Impress them on your children.** Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up". (*Deuteronomy 6:6-8*)



We might ask ourselves: How do we do that? Knowing that our children are formed by the milieu in which they live, both in what they hear and what they see, we know this matters. We may ask, do the symbols on our walls, our reading, our habits and our behaviors demonstrate God's presence?

This year, rather than preparing for Christmas, prepare for Jesus — in your heart, home and soul. St John's will be a haven for your preparations. Mary's Magnificat is the scripture base for Holden Evening Prayer on December 3 and every Saturday night worship service during Advent. Assist a family through Christmas Shares. Read Advent devotions, center an Advent wreath on your table, and quietly light its candles. Attend mid-week Advent services — and if you choose, bring a gift for the Holy Child in the form of a gift to be given to families in need in our community. Sing of His birth by caroling with us as we visit shut ins. Hear the story told by our children at the Christmas program — and stop. Stop and hold that gift of a newborn child — each day of Advent. The world stops when a baby enters a room or a world, and nothing else matters.

*Come. Prepare for Jesus.  
Pastor Kathy*

**CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP AT 7 P.M.**

# Advent at St. John's

## Prepare the way for the Lord

### Christmas Shares

Once again we will help with Second Mile's annual Christmas Shares program that collects gifts for low-income families in our community. Wrapped gifts are to be returned to the church by December 14. (Bring the gifts to a table in the Fellowship Hall) Youth of the church will shop and wrap gifts for three families on Sunday, December 7. The group will meet after Sunday School at 11:45 to go shopping at Wal-Mart, then come back to the church to have lunch and wrap gifts. Parents are asked to pick up their children at 2:30 p.m.

### A Time for Reflection on Wednesdays

Midweek Advent worship will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesdays. A light supper (not always soup!) will be served at 6 p.m. The services will be:

- December 3 – Holden Evening Prayer
- December 10 – Service of Lessons and Carols
- December 17 – Hanging of the Greens

### Preparing for Jesus

In keeping with the Advent Study of "Preparing for Jesus," we will collect items needed by parents who are preparing for the birth of a baby. The items will be given to MICA and for distribution to families in need in our community. A manger will be set up to receive the gifts. (No need to wrap them.) Use the following schedule:

- December 3 – diapers
- December 10 – blanket sleepers
- December 17 – crib sheets and crib pads

### Saturday Evening Worship

The Holden Evening Prayer service will be featured at Saturday evening worship during Advent (December 6, 13 and 20). This lovely vesper service was written

by Marty Haugen in 1985-1986 while he was the musician-in-residence at Holden Village, a Lutheran retreat center in the state of Washington. It uses the traditional form while using contemporary and inclusive language.

### Christmas Program

The Sunday School/Youth Christmas program will be held during worship on **Sunday, December 14**. Titled "Three Wisemen and a King," it uses different kinds of music (rock 'n' roll, country and soul) to tell the Christmas story. Co-directors are Ryan and Sarah Dahlby Albright.

### Caroling

Spread the joy of Christmas through song (and catch the spirit yourself). Caroling at the homes of our homebound members is planned for **Sunday afternoon, December 14**, starting at 3 p.m. In order to visit everyone, we will divide into groups, so many voices are needed. Families are encouraged to join in the fun and experience an old-fashioned custom.

We'll meet at the church to organize, then return to the church afterward for refreshments.

### Michael Burk returns as Bishop Burk

At worship on Saturday and Sunday, December 20 and 21, we will welcome Bishop Michael Burk, a son of St. John's who is now bishop of the Southeastern Iowa Synod. He will preach at both services.

## CHRISTMAS EVE

The birth of Christ will be celebrated with a candle-light service with special music on Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24, starting at 7 p.m. Holy Communion will be part of the service.

## Muriel's Musings

I am deeply troubled. As I read the words of the prophets, I see great similarities between their world and ours today. As they bring God's word of warning to turn away from the worship of false gods and turn back to follow the one true God, I see the modern idols surrounding us. But even more troubling to me are the false prophets who preach messages of despair, fear and hatred to us, and the decent, bright people who believe and quote what they saw without questioning their truth.

Further, these venomous attacks and frightening assertions are made within a framework of Christianity. As I hear what they have been saying, I remember the words of Jesus: "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravening wolves." "You will know them by their fruits." (Matthew:15-16a) Later in Matthew, Jesus warns the

faithful to turn from these false ones, for their desire is to lure his followers away. Isn't that what happens when we follow the path of hatred and fear? Jesus gave us words of faith, trust in God and love for one another. God led the Israelites safely through the wilderness; Jesus came to John and others in their wilderness and promised to be with us always. When we follow our Savior's words, we hear words of peace, love and healing, not fear and hatred. Let us, who know the truth of his words, be bold in saying to those false messengers, "We don't believe your lies and we reject them in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior."

Fear not, for when we battle evil, and this is, the Holy Spirit comes to empower, protect and keep us in God's peace and truth each day.

*Muriel Johannessen, AIM*



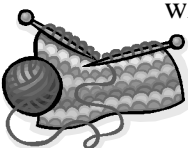
### Church News AROUND the CONGREGATION

#### New resource available

Augsburg Fortress is announcing the upcoming publication of the new Lutheran Study Bible. The new Bible features the NRSV translation as well as introductions, notes and article written by more than 60 Lutheran pastors and teaching theologians. The resource is designed to invite us to experience the Bible and its message through solid background material, unique Lutheran insights and opportunities for faith reflection. With a 30 percent discount if ordered before December 31, the cost is \$23.33 for hardcover and \$16.33 for paperback. The Bibles will be shipped in April 2009, with payment due in March. For more information and to order a copy, contact Nancy Locker, 236-5932

#### The Common Thread

A new group is forming at St. John's to knit or crochet prayer shawls for members and friends in need of support. A prayer shawl is a hand-knit or crocheted wrap into which are woven prayers and blessings for the recipient. The group will meet in the church library at 10 a.m. on the first and third Thursdays of the month. In addition to making prayer shawls, you are invited to bring other needlecraft projects 0 needlepoint, plastic canvas, embroidery. Bring a sack lunch if you'd like to stay for fellowship.



#### Faith Friends formed

Adults who are helping to support our young people in confirmation and other youth activities are Barb Baker, Karin Bursch, Norm Erickson, Bob Falck, Dianne Fuller,

Reggie Fuller, Bev Huebner, Dave Huth, Rose Osland, Perre Pedersen, Dale Selix and Jack Templeton.

#### 'No Room at the Inn'

Nativities from members of St. John's as well as other congregations in town will be on display Friday, December 5, from 3 to 8 p.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church. Sponsored by the Grinnell Ministerial Association, the display is designed to bring an awareness of homelessness in our community while reminding us of the meaning of Christmas. The ecumenical, free event is part of the downtown Jingle Bell Holiday celebration.

#### Watch Night

If you would like to join in a New Year's Eve worship service and fellowship time from 10 p.m. to midnight, call the church office or speak to Bobbie Kahler.

# Many thanks are due!

A **BIG** thank you to Vic Frana, Gaylen Johnson, Bob Roys and Russ Schuchmann for planning and installing the new telephone system at the church. (See article below for details of the project and how it will help you in contacting the office and the staff.)

**MANY THANKS** to all who helped with the new church photo directory. Because of everyone's efforts, a total of 121 individuals/families were photographed. If all goes well with the printing, we can expect the finished directories in January.

**TO EVERYONE** who returned their Times and Talents sheets with offers to help in so many different ways, thank you for your willingness to share your gifts to the ministry of St. John's.

**THANK YOU** to all who helped with the Kids Against Hunger food packaging project on November 16. St. John's provided two teams (a total of 24 youth and adults) who worked on food packets to be sent to Honduras.

**THANK YOU** to everyone who helped in any way with the community Thanksgiving dinner at St. John's.

**THANKS** to all for your cards and show of concern at the recent passing of my father.

*Les Meyers*

## Your call will be answered.....

The phone system at the church has been modified to make it more useful to the staff and to improve your ability to contact the staff. The church will continue to have a single telephone number, 236-4946. Within that number, a second telephone line previously limited to a fax machine is now both a fax and a voice line. As a result, when either line is busy, your call will be switched automatically to the unused line. If both lines are busy, you will be invited to leave a message in individual voicemail boxes - #1 for the office; #2 for Pastor Kathy; and #3 for Muriel. The system will function most efficiently if you select the correct mailbox for your message, so listen carefully to the directions and then press the number for the mailbox you want. In addition, new phones have been purchased for the office area that provide for call privacy and allow paging and call transfer between phones.

# Happy Birthday!

*Members who have birthdays in December*

**December 1**

Don Beck  
Jama Knerr  
Phindile Masuku  
Jarrid Mikel  
Lee Ritter

**December 2**

Julie Beach

**December 3**

Karen Ashby

**December 4**

Charles Routier

**December 5**

David Snyder  
Don Sundell

**December 6**

Brian Brown  
Dorothy Buchmeier

**December 7**

Ray Parker  
Mary Schuchmann

**December 8**

Gaye Van Hamme

**December 9**

David Barger

**December 11**

Ruth Lamb

**December 12**

Avis Kelm

**December 14**

Trent Baker  
Connie Weir

**December 15**

Katelyn Ditzler

**December 16**

Nancy Beck  
Jason Nisley  
Isaac Olson

**December 17**

Bob Kinseth

**December 18**

Corrinne Dahlby Albright  
Tom Ford  
Dale Selix

**December 19**

Joshua Stepanek  
Rebecca Wilson

**December 20**

Heather Crawford

**December 23**

Mason Schwarck

**December 24**

Kyle Irland  
Dale Lamb  
Blake Wilson

**December 25**

Zach Boehmer  
Ryan Dahlby Albright

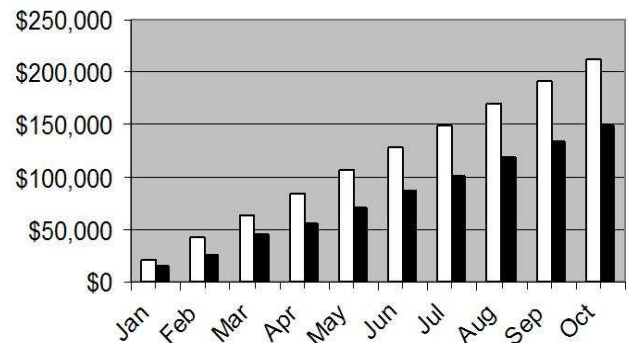
**December 26**

Linda Masuku  
Jenna Reid

**December 30**

Cheryl Clark  
Pat Gustafson  
Edith Hatcher

## 2008 Financial Picture to Date



□ Budget ■ Offerings

Average amount needed per month: \$21,261  
Average amount received per month: \$14,942

**STEWARDSHIP OF SERVICE**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3**

**Acolyte:** Joe Nowasell

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6**

**Acolyte:** Zach Osland

**Greeter:** Donna Beck

**Reader:** Karen Ashby

**Communion Assistant:** Donna Beck

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7**

**Acolyte:** Oliver Vande Stouwe

**Greeters:** Pat and Bob Larson

**Reader:** Sue McDonough

**Communion Assistants:** Vic and Jean Frana

**Coffee Servers:** D. & L. Wade, V. & F. Dillon

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10**

**Acolyte:** Troy Smith

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13**

**Acolyte:** Oliver VandeStouwe

**Greeter:** Nancy Heineman

**Reader:** Sandy Falck

**Communion Assistant:** Karen Ashby

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14**

**Acolyte:** Jacob Lamb

**Greeters:** Dale and Doris Selix

**Reader:** Todd Nelson

**Coffee Servers:** D., L. Longman, M., J. Ruchotzke

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17**

**Acolyte:** Eli Dunne

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20**

**Acolyte:** Rachel Pinkerton

**Greeter:** Gary Cook

**Reader:** Bev Hatcher

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21**

**Acolyte:** Chance Winburn

**Greeters:** Jim and Sara Dunne

**Reader:** Jim Urfer

**Communion Assistant:** G. and K. Johnson

**Coffee Servers:** Senior Youth

**CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24**

**Acolyte:** Jarren Ford

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27**

**Acolyte:** Caprise Honsbrunch

**Greeters:** Sandy and Bob Falck

**Reader:** Gary Cook

**Communion Assistant:** Bev Cook

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28**

**Acolyte:** Ashley Mikel

**Greeters:** Terry and Lynn Cline

**Reader:** Ashley Mikel

**Coffee Servers:** Rose and Keith Osland

**DECEMBER CALENDAR**

**Weekly meetings**

Staff meeting — 10 am Tuesdays

Bible Study with Muriel — 11 am Mondays, Meeting Room

Men's Breakfast — Tuesdays at 7 am at Westside Family Restaurant

LWR Quilters — Tuesdays at 1:30 pm, Room 9

<b>Wed</b>	<b>3</b>	Noon-5 pm	First Wednesday after-school program
		12:45 pm	Confirmation
		2:30-4	Rejhearsal for Christmas Program
		6 pm	Advent Soup Supper
		6:30 pm	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		7 pm	Midweek Advent Worship
<b>Thurs</b>	<b>4</b>	6:30 am	Advent Study, Saints Rest
		10 am	The Common Thread, Library
<b>Sat</b>		5:30 pm	Worship
		6:30 pm	Second Saturday Fellowship, Casa Margareta
<b>Sun</b>	<b>7</b>	9:30 am	Worship with Holy Communion
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
		10:45 am	Sunday School, preschool to Adult Forum
<b>Tue</b>	<b>9</b>	6:30 pm	Church Council, Meeting Room
<b>Wed</b>	<b>10</b>	1:30 pm	Mary Martha Circle, Mary Lu Watson, hostess
		6 pm	Advent Soup Supper
		7 pm	Midweek Advent Worship
<b>Thurs</b>	<b>11</b>	6:30 am	Advent Study, Saints Rest
<b>Sat</b>	<b>13</b>	5:30 pm	Worship
<b>Sun</b>	<b>14</b>	9:30 am	Worship, Sunday School program
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
		10:45 am	Sunday School, preschool to Adult Forum
		3 pm	Christmas caroling, meet at the church
<b>Wed</b>	<b>17</b>	6 pm	Advent Soup Supper
		6:15 pm	Celebration Singers rehearsal
		7 pm	Midweek Advent Worship
<b>Thurs</b>	<b>18</b>	9:30 am	Lydia Circle, Peggy Kolpin, hostess
		10 am	The Common Thread, Library
		Noon	Autumn Leaves, Fellowship Hall
<b>Sat</b>	<b>20</b>	5:30 pm	Worship, Bishop Burk preaching
<b>Sun</b>	<b>21</b>	8:30 am	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		9:30 am	Worship, Communion, Bishop Burke preaching
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
		10:45 am	Adult Forum (No Sunday School)
<b>Wed</b>	<b>24</b>	6:30 am	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		7 pm	Christmas Eve Worship with Holy Communion
<b>Thurs</b>	<b>25</b>		<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>
<b>Sat</b>	<b>27</b>	5:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion
<b>Sun</b>	<b>28</b>	9:30 am	Worship
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

**USHERS**

**Saturday:** (6) Gordon Ashby and Gary Cook (13) Don Beck and Bob Kinseth (20) Nancy and Brian Heineman (27) Jim Urfer and Natalie Pavey

**Sunday:** Ken Pearce, Aaron Wade, Larry Wade, Tammie Van Hamme

**NURSERY ON SUNDAY** (7) Renee Beach (14) Shirley Broders (21) Nicole Behrens (28) Sarah Dahlby Albright

**OFFERING COUNTERS** Shirle and Dave Huth, Russ Schuchmann

**ALTAR GUILD**

November 9-December 9 — Connie Weir, Brenda Mikel

Month of December — Donna Beck

December 9-January 13 — Addy Hanson

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LOVE LETTER is published monthly by St. John's Lutheran Church. Deadline for each issue is the 15th of the previous month.

Return Service Requested



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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

### DECEMBER 7

*Advent II – A Conversation with Hildegard of Bingen*  
*Psalms 146*

In the second of a four-part Advent series, host Peter Marty converses with another absentee guest. This time it is Hildegard of Bingen. The reason for absenteeism is that Hildegard and our other Advent guests are now saints of the Church. In this week's conversation, Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) shares medieval life as an outspoken woman. Here is an individual who mixed with popes and emperors. She went on preaching tours. She even authored a medical encyclopedia. Hildegard lived her interesting life from the vantage point of faith.

### DECEMBER 14

*Advent III – A Conversation with Juliana of Norwich*  
*Romans 5:4*

Juliana of Norwich, who is sometimes called Julian of Norwich (1342-c.1416), joins host Peter Marty for an imaginary conversation. Juliana possessed an unshakable belief in God despite several near-death experiences. Her profound insights on hope were gained from the conviction that one can never know true hope apart from suffering. Juliana's faith is a testimony to the abundance of grace even in the most difficult periods of life.

### DECEMBER 21

*Advent IV – A Conversation with Benedict of Nursia*  
*Isaiah 55:10-11*

For this final edition of a four-part Advent series with great saints of the church, host Peter Marty visits with St. Benedict (c. 480-c.547). Known for his famous "Rule," a Rule that still guides Benedictine followers today with its teachings on humility, silence, and obedience, Benedict zeroes in on the holy reading of Scripture for this *Grace Matters* program. He spells out the critical value of hearing Scripture not only with our intellects but also with our hearts.

### DECEMBER 28

*David Levy – The Christmas Star*  
*Matthew 2:1-10*

According to St. Matthew, the magi from the east were guided to the manger of the Christ Child by a star. That star, or whatever bright light may have appeared in the sky to guide these ancient astrologers, has fascinated believers and scientists alike for 20 centuries. **David Levy**, a lifelong astronomer, comet discoverer, and admirer of the night sky joins this broadcast for some pondering about the much talked about Christmas Star.