

LOVE LETTER

MARCH 2009

Lent begins February 25

St. John's Lutheran Church
ELCA
1224 East Street
Grinnell, IA 50112
(641) 236-4946
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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

MURIEL'S MUSINGS

Our Monday morning Bible Study has been looking at Paul's letters to the early Christian churches, exploring how to live as followers of Jesus in the midst of those who worship many other gods. Paul often contrasts the ways of the world with how Christ taught us to live: Be honest; don't be greedy; reach out to help those in need; don't repay evil with evil, but repay those who have hurt you with loving deeds done in Christ's name. That wasn't easy for those who had followed other, false gods, and it still isn't easy today. Yet, Paul exhorts all believers to be imitators of Christ, living as he did and showing love to others as Jesus did. How do we become imitators of Christ in our daily lives? How do we become people that others identify as believers, who live in harmony with God, even when that conflicts with the values of the world around us?

Those of us in the Bible Study find strength for our daily journey in the time we spend together, studying God's word and encouraging one another. We also find strength and guidance through prayer - speaking and listening to God. Although times and places vary, the importance of taking time each day to read God's word and pray is essential for us.

Jesus and his disciples exemplified this, as have leaders of the church since that time. Martin Luther, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Billy Graham and other faithful followers of Jesus made prayer a priority in their lives.

How do we do the same - in lives with so many demands and when so many days seem crammed full to overflowing, leaving precious little time for reflection, stillness and prayer? Daily devotional books can help, as can the daily lectionary and prayers in our

Our Lenten devotional booklet, "Holy Habits," can encourage us to find time for reflection, stillness and prayer.

hymnal. Even when these seem to add another "must do" to our lives, praying as we travel to work or school, saying the Lord's Prayer or others we know, as well as spontaneous prayers at happy times or

when facing a challenge, connect us to God, our Power Source. "Help!" or "Thank you!" are prayers when directed to God.

Praying before we walk into the sanctuary helps enrich and focus our worship time. Some people pray before communion or after they return to their seats. It is OK not to sing then, or to pause for silent prayers before, during and/or after worship!

Remember, Elijah heard God's voice in the stillness, not in the many sounds that surrounded him. The power of prayer cannot be overestimated, for as we speak and listen, God comes to us in an ever more intimate way, forming us and molding us ever anew into Christ's image, for our sake and for the sake of others.

My prayer is that you grow increasingly aware of God with you each day as you speak (and listen) to the One whose love for you knows no bounds.

Muriel Johannessen
Associate in Ministry



AROUND the CONGREGATION

Lent at St. John's

ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday worship will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, February 25. It will be preceded at 6 p.m. by a supper served by the youth of the church.

WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

What if you could be a witness for Jesus at his trial? What if you were one of the jury sitting in judgment on Jesus? During our midweek Lenten services, we will imagine what those testimonies would have been like. Join us for a simple meal, then journey back with us to long ago days as we worship and imagine together at midweek worship starting at 7 p.m. As part of the service, we will collect items each week for the MICA food pantry. The suggested items are:

- February 25 — laundry soap, fabric softener, stain remover
- March 4 — canned carrots, canned mixed vegetables, vegetable soup
- March 11 — personal care items such as soap, deodorant, lotion
- March 18 — Bisquick, pancake mix, syrup
- March 25 — boxed mashed potatoes, hamburger helper, spaghetti sauce

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Booklets for daily devotions during Lent are being distributed within the congregation. Children have received a booklet of devotions for families called "Coming Home to the Lord." For adults, a booklet titled "Holy Habits" was chosen. Extra copies are available in the narthex.

WEEKLY STUDY

Pastor Kathy is leading a Lenten study based on Henri Nouwen's book, "Here and Now: Living in the Spirit." Two sessions are scheduled, one at 6:30 a.m. and one at 8 a.m., both at Saints Rest downtown.

LENTEN READING

See page 3 of the Love Letter for books to read during Lent.

DURING HOLY WEEK

Fifth-graders will receive First Communion at the Maundy Thursday worship service. On Easter Sunday, April 12, we will have two worship services — a sunrise service at 7 p.m. and a traditional service at 9:30 a.m. Youth of the church will serve an Easter breakfast in the Fellowship Hall from 8 to 9 a.m.

A new baby

Congratulations to Perry and Charla Selix of Joplin, Mo., on the birth of their son, Tanner Robert Selix, on February 3. The proud grandparents are Dale and Doris Selix. Perry is a former member of St. John's.

Minutes posted

Minutes of the monthly Church Council meetings are now being posted on bulletin boards in the church. Anyone with comments or questions about the minutes is encouraged to speak to Pastor Kathy or a council member.

Directory available

For those women who have not picked up a copy of the 2009 WELCA yearbook, copies are available in the church office.

Prayer sisters

Earlier this year, women of the church who wished to have a prayer partner were matched with each other. Are you praying for your prayer sisters?

Grief support

A support group for those who have experienced loss will meet from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Fridays starting March 6 at the Grinnell United Methodist Church. To register or for more information, call 236-2418.

Church finances to date

A comparison of our budget and our offerings on a monthly basis.

Needed each month: \$21,235
Received in January: \$16,398.

St. John's Youth and Family Ministry

A **LOCK-IN** for seventh- and eighth-graders is planned for Saturday, March 7. Karin Bursch from Grinnell College has offered to be our leader, and Karin, Amy Anderson and Muriel have been busy making plans for fun, food and fellowship. Male and female adults are needed to chaperone, and food contributions would be most welcome. Please contact Amy or Muriel to offer your help.

THE COLLECTION BOX for the MICA food pantry got a big boost in February when members of the confirmation class went on a scavenger hunt gathering food items. The group divided into pairs (each with an adult) and knocked on doors in the church neighborhood. The kids were surprised by people's generosity, Pastor Kathy said, adding that the experience was lovely evangelism.

OUR YOUTH provide refreshments and serve at the coffee hour on the third Sunday of every month. Helping in March will be Amanda and Zach Osland, Eli Dunne, Joe Nowasell and Tiffany Olson. Parent helpers that day are Keith and Rose Osland and Mike and Erica Olson.

Youth in grades 4-12 will serve a meal prior to the Ash Wednesday service and a breakfast on Easter Sunday.

ST. JOHN'S will take part in the next Kids Against Hunger food packaging program on April 26.

Task force looks at chair choices

Worship at St. John's continues to draw new faces to our sanctuary, and we are continually looking at ways to be inclusive and accommodating for people of all abilities. (You may have noticed we are offering large-print bulletins and looking at upgrades to the sound system and hearing assists as well.) Options for chairs in the sanctuary are currently being reviewed by a task force formed to work out the details of implementing this aspect of making our



sanctuary more accessible and welcoming. Under a plan approved by the Church Council, removable chairs would replace a minimum of two rows of pews on either side of the aisle in the center of the sanctuary. Chairs would also replace one or more rows of pews at the rear.

Task force members are carefully looking at such things as chair construction, type of materials used, seat size, whether all or some of the chairs would have arms, location of the hymnal racks, and stability for those needing support when getting up and down. The task force is also considering aesthetics and looking at upholstery samples that would complement our current pew pads.

The Worship Music and Arts Committee and the Council of Ministers began discussing accessibility in the sanctuary in early fall. Before the current plan was agreed upon, several options were discussed.

Members of the task force are Lori Brown; convener; Brian Brown, Nancy Heineman, Lisa Henderson, Pat Larson and Muriel Johannessen. They will be available during the Adult Education hour on a Sunday in March to answer questions. If you have suggestions, you need not wait for the Q&A Forum time, we encourage you to discuss them with anyone on the task force, Muriel or Pastor Kathy.

Suggested Lenten reading

Our church library has a section devoted to books appropriate for Lent. Here are two suggestions.

Were You There? Finding Ourselves at the Foot of the Cross
By Erik Kolbell

This hope-filled book shows us that in the Passion of Jesus we hear the story of one person but the echoes of many. Though we read the story to find out who Jesus was, it is in the stories of the other characters who were present that we discover much about ourselves.

Can You Drink the Cup?
By Henri J.M. Nouwen

This question — one that Jesus asked his friends James and John — "has the power to crack open the most hardened heart and lay bare the tendons of the spiritual life," writes Nouwen, who also wrote the book being used by our Lenten Study Group. Using the cup as a metaphor, Nouwen reflects on three images — Holding, Lifting and Drinking — to articulate basics of the spiritual life.

Nancy S. Locker

Words of thanks

We would like to thank each of our church families for the cards, calls and comfort during the time of the unexpected loss of our dear brother. It was all much appreciated to help ease our sorrow.

*Gordon and Karen Ashby
Jerry and Phyllis Reid.*

I want to thank everyone for the cards, calls, flowers, and food that I received since my eye surgery, and to those who helped in the office during that time.

Jo Olson

THANK YOU to everyone who made a special contribution to the liturgical dancers from Wartburg College. We collected a total of \$320 to help support their artistic ministry.

STEWARDSHIP OF SERVICE

Welcome Team on Saturday

(**March 7**) Ed and Bev Hatcher (**14**) Pavey Family (**21**) Bob and Delores Kinseth (**28**) Norm Erickson and Sue McDonough

Nursery on Sunday

(**March 1**) Renee Beach (**8**) Dorothy Wade (**15**) Scott Bosse (**22**) Tammie Van Hamme (**29**) Laura Weigel

Ushers on Sunday

Terry Cline, Steve Dudley, Brian Heineman, Nancy Heineman, Zach Boehmer

Offering Counters

Deb and Lance Longman

Altar Guild

February 10-March 10 — Nancy Beck
Month of March — Addy Hanson
March 10-April 14 — Bev Huebner

Wishing You a Happy Birthday in March

March 1

Jarren Ford
Steve Gustafson

March 2

Mike Anderson
Lori Oltrogge

March 3

Bryan Cook
Charlene Knight
Randy Smith

March 4

Roger Henderson
Rebecca Pinkerton

March 5

Tyler Huebner

March 6

Rose Frana
Cheryl Irland
John Martinek Jr.

March 7

Sarah-Frischmeyer
Ashley Mikel

March 9

Breanna Frana

March 10

Breanna Sanders
Jena Sanders

March 11

Phil Frana
Dorothy Wade

March 12

Karen Beck

March 14

Kim Busse

March 15

Aaron Wade

March 18

Alexander Reid

March 19

Zen Masuku

March 20

Scott Beach
Brenda Crawford

Kelli Walter

March 21

Fred England
Dave Huth
Paul Pedersen

March 22

Kyle Nisley

March 23

Fred England
Ella Frana

March 24

Aimee Kramer

March 26

Pat Larson
Brian Wilson

March 27

Margaret Amo

March 31

Gail Flagel

Summary of Church Council meeting

The following are highlights of the Church Council meeting held February 10.

As part of the effort to make the sanctuary more accommodating to persons with special physical needs, the Memorial Committee is looking into the purchase of wireless hearing assistance devices.

Discussion was held on how to better communicate the church's financial status to the congregation. To help with communication in general, minutes of the monthly council meetings will be posted on the bulletin board in the education wing and highlights of the meetings will be included in the Love Letter.

In lieu of raises for Pastor Kathy and Muriel in 2009, they will receive extra weekends off.

STEWARDSHIP OF SERVICE

MARCH CALENDAR

SUNDAY, MARCH 1

Acolyte: Troy Smith
Greeters: Bob and Pam Ashing
Reader: Brian Heineman
Communion Servers: A. Hanson, P. Kolpin
Coffee Assistants: J. and D. Martinek, B. Wilson

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

Acolyte: Zach Osland

SATURDAY, MARCH 7

Acolyte: Troy Smith
Reader: Nicole Behrens

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

Acolyte: Oliver VandeStouwe
Greeters: Chelsey and Mark Kolpin
Reader: Chelsey Kolpin
Fellowship: Rick, Luann Weigel, Margaret Amo

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

Acolyte: Jacob Lamb

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

Acolyte: Rachel Pinkerton
Reader: Nancy Beck
Communion Assistant: Charlene Knight

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

Acolyte: Eli Dunne
Greeters: Ray Parker and Jack Templeton
Reader: Mike Schaeffer
Communion Assistants: J. and M. Ruchotzke
Coffee Servers: Youth

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

Acolyte: Chance Winburn

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

Acolyte: Jarren Ford
Reader: Gladys Booth

SUNDAY, MARCH 22

Acolyte: Caprisse Honsbruch
Greeters: Russ and Nicole Behrens
Reader: Lisa Henderson
Fellowship: R. and L. Henderson, N. Urfer

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

Acolyte: Ashley Mikel

SATURDAY, MARCH 28

Acolyte: Joe Nowasell
Reader: Sue McDonough
Communion Assistant: Bev Cook

SUNDAY, MARCH 29

Acolyte: Zach Osland
Greeters: Everett and Verna Gerrish
Reader: Gaylen Johnson
Fellowship: Bob and Pam Ashing, Natalie Pavey

Weekly meetings and activities

Staff meeting — Tuesdays at 10 am
 Bible Study with Muriel — Mondays at 11 am, Meeting Room
 Men's Breakfast — Tuesdays at 7 am, Westside Family Restaurant
 LWR Quilters — Tuesdays at 1:30 pm, Room 9

Sun	1	8:30 am	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		9:30 am	Worship with Holy Communion
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to/Adult Forum
Wed	4	Noon-5 pm	First Wednesday after-school program
		12:45 pm	Confirmation
		6 pm	Soup supper, Fellowship Hall
		7 pm	Midweek Lenten worship
Thurs	5	10 am	Common Thread, Church Library
		6:30, 8 am	Lenten Study Group, Saints Rest
Sat	7	5:30 pm	Worship
			Lock-in for grades 7-8
Sun	8	9:30 am	Worship
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult Forum
Tue	10	6:30 pm	Church Council, Meeting Room
Wed	11	11 am	WELCA board meeting, Meeting Room
		1:30 pm	Mary Martha Circle, Shirley Broders, hostess
		6 pm	Soup supper, Fellowship Hall
		7 pm	Midweek Lenten worship
Thurs	12	6:30, 8 am	Lenten Study Group, Saints Rest
Sat	14	5:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion
		6:30 pm	Second Saturday fellowship, at the Falcks
Sun	15	8:30 am	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		9:30 am	Worship with Holy Communion
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult Forum
Wed	18	Noon	Autumn Leaves, Fellowship Hall
		6 pm	Soup supper, Fellowship Hall
		7 pm	Midweek Lenten worship
Thurs	19	6:30, 8 am	Lenten Study Group, Saints Rest
		9:30 am	Lydia Circle, Verna Gerrish, hostess
		10 am	Common Thread, Church Library
Sat	21	5:30 pm	Worship
Sun	22	8:30 pm	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		9:30 am	Worship
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult Forum
Tue	24	7 pm	Sarah Circle
Wed	25	6 pm	Soup supper, Fellowship Hall
		7 pm	Midweek Lenten worship
Thurs	26	6:30, 8 am	Lenten Study Group, Saints Rest
Sat	28	5:30 pm	Worship with Holy Communion
Sun	29	8:30 pm	Choir rehearsal, Music Room
		9:30 am	Worship
		10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
		10:45 am	Sunday School, Preschool to Adult Forum



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Community Midweek Lenten Services

The Grinnell Ministerial Association is once again sponsoring midweek Lenten worship and luncheons for the community at various Grinnell churches. The brief service begins at 12:10 p.m. and is followed by a luncheon. On Good Friday, there will be a longer service not followed by a meal. This year's theme is "Living with Loss." Dates, locations, speakers and titles are:

March 4

First Presbyterian Church
Rev. Bob Williams
Loss of Power, based on Luke 4:1-15

March 11

United Church of Christ Congregational
The Rev. Carolyn Bitner
Loss of Wealth, based on Matthew 19:16-28

March 18

Grinnell United Methodist Church
Chaplain Susan Leathem Sanning
Loss of Face/Virtue, based on Luke 15:11-32

March 25

St. Mary's Catholic Church
Pastor Steve Roobol
Loss of Abilities, based on John 5:2-20

April 1

First Baptist Church
Father Nick Adams
Loss of Community, based on John 6:25-58

Good Friday, April 10

Herrick Chapel
Rev. Katie Snipes
Loss of Life, based on Mark 15:12-26