

# LOVE LETTER

JULY 2009

**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

**During the school year**

## OFFICE HOURS

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

## COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

**Nancy Heineman**, president  
**Bob Larson**, vice president  
**Vicki Dillon**, secretary  
**Gary Cook**, treasurer  
**Dan Huebner**, Properties  
**Donna Beck**, Stewardship  
**Kelly Rose**, Education  
**Lisa Henderson**, Worship,  
Music, Arts  
**Bobbie Kahler**, Fellowship  
Service  
**Sue McDonough, Fred England**,  
Evangelism  
**Chad Nath**, Youth

## MUSINGS FROM MURIEL

*All of us have wrestled with forgiveness — letting go of thoughts and feelings that bind us to an offense committed against us or those we care about. In July, Pastor Kathy will lead a discussion of the Amish concept of forgiveness based on the book “Amish Grace.” Details about the book and the discussion can be found on page 2. Three years ago, shortly after the horrific shootings in an Amish community in Pennsylvania, Muriel wrote the following message for another church publication.*

Often when people hear about some terrible tragedy, they ask hard questions. “Where was God? Why didn’t God stop this?” It is a cry that arises out of our human grief and confusion when events occur that make no sense to us, and innocents suffer and die.

When a man came into the West Nickel Mines Amish School, the children and teachers knew him. He was the milkman who picked up milk from their farms. He lived near them, and had a wife and three sons. But this time, he didn’t come as a milkman. This time, he was a tortured man bent on doing great harm to them. Where was God? Right there in that school.

When gunman Charles Roberts sent everyone out except the 10 girls, bound them and lined them up against the blackboard, God was there. God was there in the teacher who ran to a non-Amish farm nearby to phone for help. God was there in the prayers of the children and adults outside. And God was there, speaking through Marian Fisher, at 13 the oldest of the girls, who asked the gunman to shoot her first, hoping he would then let the other girls go. Her friend, the next oldest, said the same. Where was God? Speaking those words. And when law enforcement officers arrived and the assailant shot all 10 girls, killing five and critically

wounding the others before killing himself, God stayed with those families. That very day, the grandfather of two of the murdered girls took food and forgiveness to the wife and sons of their killer.

As I think of that grandfather walking to their house, I see Christ walking. As I hear the families of the girls speak of forgiveness, see them attending the killer’s funeral as well as welcoming his family to the funerals of their children, I see Christ. As I see non-Amish neighbors lining the roads, blocking traffic from intruding on the funeral processions, standing in respect and shared grief, I see Christ. And I wonder.

Those who saw Christ walking on the roads of the Holy Land were changed. Those who heard his words of forgiveness and healing were changed. Their lives could no longer be ones of “business as usual.” Instead, people spoke of those who had seen Christ as ones who loved, forgave, shared what they had with others, welcomed strangers and lived in peace with those around them. Christ walked in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania at that time, in a community that responded to tragedy with forgiveness. How do we respond?

Muriel Johannessen  
Associate in Ministry



# AROUND the CONGREGATION

## SEMIANNUAL MEETING

### Officers elected, sabbatical policy approved

Congregational leaders were elected at St. John's semiannual meeting on June 21. Those elected to a first term were **Nancy Heineman**, president; **Bob Larson**, vice president; **Vicki Dillon**, secretary; **Fred Englund**, co-chair of Evangelism Committee; **Chad Nath**, chair of Youth Committee. Serving a second term will be **Sue McDonough**, co-chair of Evangelism, and **Dan Huebner**, chair of Properties Committee. Continuing as council members will be **Gary Cook**, treasurer; **Kelly Rose**, Education; **Donna Beck**, Stewardship; **Bobbie Kahler**, Fellowship; **Lisa Henderson**, Worship, Music and the Arts. The Service Committee chairmanship is unfilled at this time. Council members serve two-year terms, except for president and vice president, who serve for one year.

In other business at the meeting, a sabbatical policy for full-time and part-time pastoral leadership was approved. Fred Dillon was asked to investigate the purchase of a commercial dishwasher in the church kitchen. Officers and committee chairmen were thanked for their efforts in the past year.

### Baptized

Baptized at St. John's on June 13 were Callum and Liam Han, twin sons of Renee and Ed Han. Their sponsors are Julie and Zach Greenwood and Darla and Ken Pearce.

### Book discussion

The extraordinary grace of forgiveness will be the focus of book discussion groups coming up in July. The resource will be the book *Amish Grace*: Two beginning-discussion times are offered on Thursday, July 9 – at 10:30 a.m. or at 5:30 p.m. The gathered groups will decide if more than one session is desired. Everyone is welcome.

### Vacation Bible School

It's not too late to register for Vacation Bible School, to be held

**July 12-16  
6 to 8:15 p.m.  
United Methodist  
Church**



There's a class for adults also, led by Pastor Kathy and the Rev. Len Eberhart from the UMC.

Registration forms are available in the church office.

### MICA food pantry

For the month of July, needed items at the MICA food pantry are pancake mix, muffin and bread mix, and syrup. A collection basket is located in the narthex.

### Preserving the past

Are you interested in what happened at St. John's in the past, or in collecting news of St. John's events and people today? We are interested in forming a historical task force that would collect information and keep it in a safe place and form for today's and future generations. If this is one of your interests, please see Pastor Kathy or Muriel.

### Goodies for graduates

Help send our **five** 2009 high school graduates off to college or jobs with a reminder of their church family. Once again we will give them "Care Bags" filled with personal care products, towels, snacks, quarters for the laundry, etc. Bring items to the church office by **Sunday, July 26**.

### Wish list

Help! The church office needs a replacement computer - a desktop suitable for word processing and email, and with a Windows XP or newer operating system. A Tech Task Force will review donations to make sure the replacement is better than what we have (which is faltering).

### Retreat coming up

There is still time to join the WELCA Women's Retreat, July 24 and 25 at Sinsinawa, a retreat center in southwestern Wisconsin. See Nancy Locker for details.

### Church finances to date

Comparison of our offerings and our budget through May

**Needed to date:** \$106,175

**Received to date:** \$95,199

**Difference:** (\$10,976)

## NOTES OF THANKS

**THANK YOU** to the congregation for the cards, thoughts and prayers while I was in the hospital expecting our twins, Callum and Liam. Thank you, too, to Lydia Circle for the prayer shawl. It is a great comfort.

*Renee and Ed Han  
Callum and Liam*

**THANK YOU** to the members of St. John's for the visits, food, flowers and the time of our mother's illness and passing. And thank you to Muriel and Pastor Roys for their visits in the nursing home and hospital.

*Family of Matilda Bauman  
Don Bauman  
Marjory Christinson*

**THE FAMILY** of Darrell W. Rojohn Sr. wishes to thank all the members of St. John's congregation for their support through cards, food, flowers and personal visits at the time of his passing. Your support at this time is very much appreciated. We are blessed to be a part of such a wonderful church family.

*Sue Rojohn and family*

**FOLLOWING** my mother's stroke and death, it was so comforting all the different messages of support and prayers. St. John's is indeed a special circle of God's love. Thank you so very much.

*Peggy Kolpin and family*

## What are your spiritual gifts?

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul lists several spiritual gifts, reminding us that God individually and uniquely gifts us to fulfill our calling in God's kingdom.

The study groups meeting on Monday morning and Wednesday evening have explored how they have been gifted.

If you would like to take a spiritual gifts inventory to identify your God-given gifts, see Muriel.

## Wishing you a Happy Birthday!

*Our baptized members who have birthdays in July are:*

### July 1

Alyssa Bosse  
Rick Stepanek

### July 2

Sue Bailey

### July 3

Tami Lai

### July 5

Tammie Van Hamme

### July 6

Shirle Huth

### July 7

Lauren Hagemeister  
Lindsay Peter

### July 8

Mark Irland  
Ryan Ness  
Darla Pearce

### July 9

Leon Beck  
Dorothy Meyers  
Ken Dalldorf  
Elaine Hamman

### July 10

Benjamin Kline  
Curtis Smith

### July 11

Kim Clark  
Fred Hagemeister

### July 12

Peggy Kolpin  
Kimberly Youngdale

### July 13

Sydney Anderson

### July 14

Chad Nath

### July 15

Philip Arendt  
Glen Mikel  
Susan Mikel

### July 16

Luke Longman

### July 17

Karen Billman  
Virginia Billman  
Mark Sanders

### July 19

Sarah Dahlby  
Albright  
Connor Morrison

### July 21

Lu Ahrens

### July 22

Tami Ditzler  
Darla Simpson

### July 23

Doug Longman  
Dan Nisley  
Sonya Nisley  
Heather Urfer

### July 24

Leora Jones  
Chad Weigel

### July 25

Susan Martinek  
Jo Olson

### July 27

Ryan Barger  
Fiona Urfer

### July 28

Megan Brown  
Muriel Johannessen

### July 29

Laura Ness

### July 31

Terry Cline  
Judy Lebeck



Making their Affirmation of Baptism at St. John's on May 31 (Pentecost) were (back row, left to right) Troy Smith, Oliver VandeStouwe, Jarren Ford. (front row) Zach Osland, Joe Nowasell, Ashley Mikel and Caprisse Honsbruch.

**STEWARDSHIP OF SERVICE****SATURDAY, JULY 4****Acolyte:** Eli Dunne**Welcome Team:** Dave and Shirle Huth**Reader:** Jim Urfer**SUNDAY, JULY 5****Acolyte:** Chance Winburn**Greeters:** Loren and Peggy Kolpin**Reader:** Peggy Kolpin**Communion Assistants:** J., M. Ruchotzke**Fellowship:** L., D. Wade, Margaret Amo**SATURDAY, JULY 11****Acolyte:** Caprisse Honsbruch**Welcome Team:** Ed and Bev Hatcher**Reader:** Sue McDonough**Communion Assistant:** Albert Knight**SUNDAY, JULY 12****Acolyte:** Jacob Lamb**Greeters:** Anita and Tom Ford**Reader:** Kathy Johnson**Fellowship:** D., D. Sundell, G., S. Broders**SATURDAY, JULY 18****Acolyte:** Ashley Mikel**Welcome Team:** N. Erickson, S. McDonough**Reader:** Molly Urfer**SUNDAY, JULY 19****Acolyte:** Joe Nowasell**Greeters:** Dan and Bev Huebner**Reader:** Nancy Heineman**Communion Assistants:** T., L. Cline**Fellowship:** Junior Youth**SATURDAY, JULY 25****Acolyte:** Zach Osland**Welcome Team:** Charlene, Albert Knight**Reader:** Ted Urfer**Communion Assistant:** Molly Urfer**SUNDAY, JULY 26****Acolyte:** Rachel Pinkerton**Greeters:** Shirley and Gene Broders**Reader:****Communion Assistants:** T., L. Cline**Fellowship:** Terry, Lynn Cline, Kelly Rose**USHERS ON SUNDAYS**

Ted Clauson, Mike Anderson, Scott, Julie and Renee Beach, Loren Kolpin

**NURSERY ON SUNDAYS**

(5) Dorothy Wade, (12) Scott Bosse (19) Tammie Van Hamme (26) Renee Beach

**ALTAR GUILD**

July 1-July 14 — Deb Longman

Month of July — Pam Ashing

July 14-August 11 — Margaret Amo

**OFFERING COUNTERS**

Steve and Pat Gustafson, Eric Pavey

**God's Work, Our Hands, Together.****2009 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly**

*Pastor Kathy, Nancy Locker and Austin Elling represented St. John's at the 2009 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly June 12-13 at Wartburg College, Waverly. The following is taken from their report*

The sessions at the Synod Assembly included worship, speakers and business meetings.

Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore, assistant professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, led delegates in Word and Prayer, as well as a forum on Bible study. Dr. Kenneth Innskeep, ELCA director for research and evaluation, presented information on the growth/decline of churches in America. It is estimated that 80% of the U.S. population does not attend worship. (We may need to be more intentionally accessible in our worship.)

In business at the meetings, delegates adopted a mission strategy calling for deeper connections and partnerships in the synod.

Delegates also approved a resolution supporting the proposed ELCA Social Statement, "Human Sexuality, Gift and Trust" and the "Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies."

Also approved was a resolution affirming the current Tour de Revs (a clergy bike ride that will visit all 65 synods in an effort to raise money and increase awareness of world hunger) and calling for support when they visit our synod on August 6. Each congregation in the synod is challenged to contribute at least \$6 per baptized member annually to the ELCA

World Hunger Appeal. Offerings at the Synod Assembly went to the ELCA Fund for Leaders and the ELCA World Hunger Appeal.

**Pastor Kathy elected**

Our Pastor Kathy was elected to a two-year term on the Synod Council, a 24-member board that acts as the board of directors of this synod and serves as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. The Synod Council meets regularly with the bishop in meetings that execute program goals, budget planning, and issuing letters of call, among other responsibilities.

**For more information**

You can read the proposed social statement on human sexuality and ministry policies at [www.elca.org/faithfuljourney](http://www.elca.org/faithfuljourney). The materials also contain a letter from the Conference of Bishops.


Our Bishop Michael Burk is urging congregations to approach the issues to be considered at the Churchwide Assembly in August in Minneapolis in the spirit of the eighth commandment and Luther's explanation of that commandment.

Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson has called the whole ELCA to 50 days of prayer, starting June 29.

You can learn more about Bishop Hanson's call to prayer by visiting the website [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org) and search for "50 days of prayer"

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SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			<b>1</b> 7 pm Celebration Singers	<b>2</b> 10 am Common Thread	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 5:30 pm Worship 
<b>5</b> 9:30 am Worship with Holy Communion 10:30 am Fellowship	<b>6</b> 11 am Bible Study	<b>7</b> 7 am Men's Breakfast 1 pm LWR Quilters 7 pm Caring Team meeting	<b>8</b> 10 am Communications Team 5:30 pm Worship, Music, Arts Committee meeting 7 pm Celebration Singers	<b>9</b> 10:30 am WELCA Board meeting 10:30 am Book Discussion 1:30 pm Mary Martha Circle 5:30 Book Discussion 7 pm Evangelism Committee meeting	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 5:30 pm Worship with Holy Communion 6:30 pm Second Saturday Fellowship at Casa Margaritas
<b>12</b> 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Fellowship	<b>13</b> 11 am Bible Study	<b>14</b> 7 am Men's Breakfast 1 pm LWR Quilters	<b>15</b> Noon Autumn Leaves 7 pm Celebration Singers	<b>16</b> 9:30 am Lydia Circle 10 am Common Thread	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 5:30 pm Worship <i>Children will sing songs learned at Vacation Bible School</i> 6:30 pm All Ages event at Ahrens Park
<b>19</b> 9:30 am Worship with Holy Communion 10:30 am Fellowship	<b>20</b> 11 am Bible Study	<b>21</b> 7 am Men's Breakfast 1 pm LWR Quilters	<b>22</b> 7 pm Celebration Singers	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 5:30 pm Worship with Holy Communion and HYMN SING <b>WOMEN'S RETREAT</b> at Siminawa Retreat Center
<b>26</b> 9:30 am Worship and HYMN SING 10:30 a.m. Fellowship	<b>27</b> 11 am Bible Study	<b>28</b> 7 am Men's Breakfast 1 pm LWR Quilters	<b>29</b> 10 am Staff meeting 7 pm Celebration Singers	<b>30</b> 10 am-3 pm Adult Education Task Force	<b>31</b>	

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(641) 236-4946

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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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## Sing your favorite hymn!

at worship July 25 and 26

What are the Top 10 at St. John's? Vote for your favorite hymn from now until July 19 — and we'll sing the top choices at



worship on Saturday and Sunday, July 25 and 26. Ballots and a ballot box are located in the narthex. Simply write the name of your favorite hymn on the slips of paper provided and put the paper in the box. Sign your name if you'd like to be notified that your choice will be sung.

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## FREE RIDES AVAILABLE Ministry of Transportation

Did you know that St. John's offers rides to medical and other appointments? A group of eight volunteers from the congregation is ready and willing to do the driving.

The free service was initiated a year ago but has not been widely publicized. Norm Erickson, who came up with the idea and is the coordinator of the program, would like to spread the word. He sees the church as a group of people who help each other. "It's our obligation," he says.

The idea is simple: If you need a ride to an appointment or have an emergency or are otherwise in need of transportation, call Norm. He will find a driver. If he can't find one, he'll do it himself.

While several days' notice is helpful, Norm says he will try hard to accommodate last-minute needs. The rides can be local or regional, including trips to Des Moines, Marshalltown and Iowa City. There is no cost involved.

So, if you need a ride, call Norm at 236-6902. He'll find a driver and make the arrangements for pickup.