

# FIRST FORUM Newsletter

226 North Putnam St.  
PO Box 516  
Algona, IA 50511-0516

## DECEMBER 2011

### **Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Christmas has been outlawed by Congress.**

The holiday season, Advent, the new Christian year, Christmas season, the holidays, Hanukah, Kwanzaa, the Winter Solstice, these are all phrases that we use to describe this time from Thanksgiving through New Years. While they all cover almost all the same dates, they mean different things to different people.

For some it means great shopping deals starting on Black Friday. For some it means family, friends, good food and presents. For some it means remembering their African heritage, for some it means remembering the birth of the Christ Child, for some it means the beginning of the Christian calendar year. For many of us it is a combination of these meanings, for many of us these is sometimes a sense of conflict between those meanings.

Do you feel some of that conflict? How about the time crunch that comes with all those different purposes of these days? This is not a new phenomenon for people, but especially for Christians. There is a definite tension between the Christian events that are celebrated and some of those of the surrounding culture.

For example, you may have heard that because we didn't actually know the date of Christ's birth, the early church set it smack in the middle of the pagan's winter celebrations, the Feast to the Sun God, Mithras and the Feast of Saturnalia. In doing this they hoped to encourage early Christians to "choose" Christ focused celebrations instead of pagan or anti-Christian celebrations.

The tension between pagan celebrations and Christian celebrations continued throughout the Middle Ages. Saint Nicholas was originally a real man by the name of Bishop of Myra in Asia Minor from the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Tradition says he generously gave gifts anonymously to the poor.

When the Puritans came to America they wanted to be a "New" Christian community. It was called "A City of the Hill" or a "Light to the Nations", an image of Jerusalem from the Old Testament. The idea was to be an example to others what a good Christian community would look like. One of the steps they took was to outlaw Christmas. Unfortunately, because there were little Christian celebrations, secular celebrations grew stronger, which has just continued to grow throughout our American history. Did you know 1939 President Roosevelt moved the date of Thanksgiving back to the third Thursday of November to expand the

Christmas shopping season? Now we see Christmas decorations displayed even before Halloween.

Often we will say that Christmas has become too secularize or commercialized. In fact it has always had that tension. While the exact celebrations are different than 1,000 years ago, the challenges are the same. In our the church today our worship focus is on anticipating Christ's birth, but also there is a focus on the second coming of Christ, including the scary warnings of Christ towards the end of his ministry. While this feels somewhat incongruent I think the idea is to remind us that our behavior is just as important as we anticipate the birth of Christ as it is as we anticipate Christ's second coming.

I share this information to help us better understand this tension within our culture and, often, ourselves. We often feel guilty during this season because we are not being "Holy" enough, yet there are so many different focuses it is hard to know what we are supposed to be doing.

I encourage you, your family and all of us, to just be mindful of the reasons for this tension we often feel. Don't beat yourself up with a general feeling of guilt. Ask God to help you choose faithful activities whether they are overtly Christian or not. After all we are called to follow the values of a disciple of Christ regardless of the day or season.

Pastor Marsha Smith



## ADOPT-A-FAMILY

The church's Adopt-a-Family Christmas tree will soon be on display. Your generosity again this year will bring added joy to five families in the community who are in need. Take one or more of the "ornaments" from the tree, purchase and wrap the gift, and bring it to the church. Affix the "ornament" from the tree to the package to identify its contents. Please bring your wrapped gifts by **Sunday, December 18**. Many thanks to Margo Adams, Joan Wiemann and Marilyn Nielsen for spear-heading this project.

### Family #1

Adult female; requests gas and food cards

### Family #2

Adult female; requests gas and food cards

### Family #3

Family of five; adults request gas and food cards; five year old boy: size 5T tops and bottoms-likes cars and Disney movies; four year old boy: size 6T tops and bottoms-likes Toy Story and Disney movies and toys; two year old boy: size 3T tops and bottoms; likes puppies and animals

### Family #4

Single mom, with nine year old son. She requests gas and food cards; the boy wears size 10 tops and bottoms

### Family #5

Family of four; adults request gas and food cards; three year old boy wears size 4-5T tops and 3T-4T bottoms-likes CARS (the movie) and Spongebob; nine month old girl wears size 18 months tops and bottoms-likes baby toys, socks and size four diapers.

## UPCOMING EVENTS IN DECEMBER

**Thursday, December 1, 7:00 p.m.**  
Advent Worship begins in the Chapel.

**Sunday, December 4, 11:30 a.m.**  
Christmas decorating/Chili luncheon  
Fun for the whole family!

**Sunday, December 4, 6:00 p.m.**  
Women of the ELCA Advent Potluck & Program

**Thursday, December 8, 7:00 p.m.**  
Advent Worship continues in the Chapel.

**Sunday, December 11, 10:30 a.m.**  
Worship & Christmas Music Festival  
All the choirs of First Lutheran will present  
musical selections of the season.

**Thursday, December 15, 7:00 p.m.**  
Advent Worship in the Chapel.

**Saturday, December 17, 4:00 p.m.**  
Sunday School Christmas Program

**Saturday, December 24, 4:00 & 7:00 p.m.**  
Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Services  
with Holy Communion  
Church Office Closed

**Sunday, December 25, 10:30 a.m.**  
Worship  
NO 8:00 a.m. worship/NO Sunday School

**Wednesday, December 28**  
NO Confirmation or Youth Activities  
NO Choir Rehearsals

**Saturday, December 31, 5:30 p.m.**  
Contemporary Worship with Holy Communion  
Church Office Closed

**Sunday, January 1, 10:30 a.m.**  
Holy Communion Worship  
NO 8:00 a.m. worship/NO Sunday School





## KICK

Kids in Christ's Kingdom  
Grades 1-5

### Early Out Fun Days

- December 7: 1:45-5:00 p.m.



## Upcoming Youth Fundraiser Dates

- Soup-off - February 11
- Rummage Sale - March
- Easter Breakfast - April 8
- Mulch Sale - May 5

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(See Luke 2:1-16)

12-22-2004

WHEN CHRISTMAS PLAYS COLLIDE



Grades 6-8

### December Meetings for Campaigners

- December 7: 7-8:00 p.m.  
*Chaperones & Snacks: Merrill family*
- December 14: 7-8:00 p.m.  
*Chaperones & Snacks: Herbst-Ulmer family*
- December 21: 7-8:00 p.m.  
*Chaperones & Snacks: Colleen Teeuwe*
- December 28: NO Campaigners or Confirmation classes this night.

## YMCA Lock-in for BASIC & Campaigners!

Where: Algona YMCA

When: Saturday, January 28  
10:00 p.m.-6:00 a.m.

What: Swimming, Basketball, Volleyball, Pool, Hoonting, etc.

Cost: \$10

Bring: Swimsuit, towel, hoonting gear, friends...

RSVP: By Wednesday, January 25, to Colleen at 281.701.4202 or [youth@netamumail.com](mailto:youth@netamumail.com)

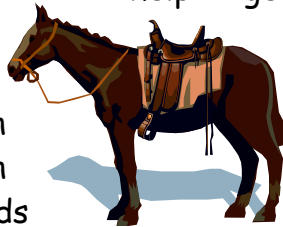
### PLEASE NOTE:

There will be NO Sunday School on December 25 and January 1 due to the Christmas and New Year's holiday weekends.

# Wisconsin Junior High Mission Trip

The date for the Jr. High trip is July 25 thru July 31st. This is done through the Camp Crossways Camping Ministries which will provide sleeping, food, & equipment. We have a couple of different options which we will discuss in the following couple of weeks:

**Red River Riders Therapeutic Horse Riding Ranch**-Groups head to the farm to help with some manual work and help get the horses ready for class. Groups then get to assist with class which consists of working with people with special needs as they work to develop fine and gross motor skills while riding a horse.



**Work at Lutheran Church of the Wilderness**-- This partner of Crossways is located on the Stockbridge-Muncee reservation, which is part of the Mohican Nation. Service projects have included doing work with members of the tribe to take care of the church building, and working with congregation members to provide programs and services to those who live on the reservation. All groups who go to work at Lutheran Church of the Wilderness will stay for a potluck put on by the congregation along with a drum circle and Native American dancing

**Backpacking the Porkies:** Head up to the Porcupine Mountains of Northern Michigan for a few nights of backpacking and fun. Your week will begin at Imago Dei Village for some group-building time, then you'll drive up to Michigan to spend some nights in the great outdoors. Crossways will provide all backpacks and other equipment; participants

just need to bring a sleeping bag and clothes to wear on the trail.

## **Adventure Opportunities:**

- Bike Trip
- Canoeing
- Caving
- High Ropes/Rock Wall

Friends are welcome to attend. Scholarships will be available please contact Colleen Teeuwe at 281.207.4202 or [youth@netamumail.com](mailto:youth@netamumail.com). Forms for registration will be online and in my office.



## **IN BETWEEN SERVICE TREATS**

Assignments to date are as follows:

- December 4: Mark Meyer family
- December 11: Lenz family
- December 18: Teeuwe family
- December 25: Smith family



*“The Bible is the cradle wherein Christ is laid.”*

*~ Martin Luther*



## BASIC

### Brothers & Sisters in Christ Grades 9-12

#### December Meetings for BASIC

- **December 14: 7-8:00 p.m.**
  - *Snacks: Larson family*
- **December 28: Christmas Break**
  - *No BASIC*



### Christmas Party!

Our December 14 meeting at 7:00 p.m. will be a Christmas Party. Bring a fun gift not more than \$10. There will be food and games. Don't eat ahead of time!

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**Cost:** \$10

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## Denver Urban Ministries Sr. High Mission Trip

We're heading to the Mile High City of Denver, CO for service through the Urban Education program.

Cost for the trip is \$150 per youth includes transportation, gas, food and lodging in Denver, four days of service and two days to raft, zipline, and other mountain adventures.

Registration form for the trip along with a \$25 deposit is due by December 31. Invite a friend or two!!! Scholarships will be available please contact Colleen at 281.207.4202 or [youth@netamumail.com](mailto:youth@netamumail.com).



### Family Bowling

We had a great time last month and would like to do it again. All are invited to an evening of fellowship and fun at Sundance Lanes in Humboldt from 5-7:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 15. Cost is \$10 for two games, shoes and pizza. Meet at church at 4:30 p.m. to carpool. For any questions or to RSVP contact Colleen at 281.701.4202 or [youth@netamumail.com](mailto:youth@netamumail.com).

### Soup Off

Mark your calendar for Saturday, February 11 for the 7th Annual Soup Off is coming!! Start thinking of your favorite soup to bring to this time honored competition. Compete for your name on the coveted Soup Off plaque! More information will follow in the January newsletter.

# Dinners for 8

## What are the details?

Eight people (couples or singles of all ages) form a group. Once you register, the Dinner for Eight Committee will assign you to a group. Groups are formed to begin in January 2012.

Group members take turns hosting a meal – Each couple (or combination of singles/couple) will take a turn being the host for your group. Each group meets four times during the year according to the availability of all group members.

## What is expected of each host?

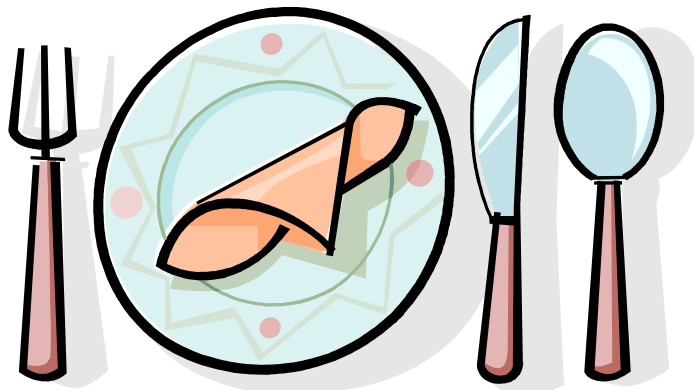
- The host(s) contact the other members of your group to set the date and time for your dinner,
- The hosts provide the main course in their home. Singles can team with another single or couple. Groups are encouraged to keep the meals casual and focus on the fellowship. Don't worry if you don't have a large dining area or are not a gourmet chef, it's the coming together that matters!

## How do we sign up?

To register to be part of a Dinner for Eight group signup on the sheet in the narthex or contact Colleen at 281.701.4202 or [youth@netamumail.com](mailto:youth@netamumail.com) .

## Then what happens?

Look for your Dinner for Eight letter in mid-January telling you who else is in your group along with their phone numbers and email addresses. The host at the top of the list is responsible for contacting others in the group to set up the first dinner. Remember, look for new names, the point is to meet and/or get to better know other folks in our church family!



## C.A.D. REPORT

C.A.D. or Center for Agricultural Development is a partnership between the Western Iowa Synod and the Southern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Since 2009 this partnership has secured a small piece of test acreage, constructed a small concrete building and begun the process of inviting area farmers to come and learn techniques to aid increased crop production and healthy livestock.

On Sunday, November 6, 2011, about 200 people gathered at the Event Center in Spencer to learn of its growth and mission. Two guests from Tanzania were present: Rev. Charles Mwanetepele the CAD Executive Director, Martins Chodata the CAD Board Vice Chairman. Jean Twilingiyumukiza, from neighboring Rwanda and director of the Ruyumba Farm Development & Training Center was also present.

Following a table blessing in Swahili and a lovely meal, those present including Ray and Marilyn Nielsen and Pastor Mark and Linnea Holmer, heard several reports attesting to the impact that CAD is having on the local agricultural community. Some examples include several new water wells, development of irrigation systems, better crop management by the local farm families whose average size farm in 2.5 acres, and the purchase of a tractor, trailer, seed planter, pick-up truck and storage units for the CAD test plots and small staff.

Several key announcements were made. Mr. Twilingiyumukiza from Rwanda operates a similar program that will now be used as a model for the expansion of CAD. This partnership was suggested by the Lutheran World Federation. Second, the Government of Tanzania has donated about 40 acres of prime land along a small river and close to the CAD Center to the Southern Diocese.

Third, nearly 20,000 youth are now part of fifty CAD sponsored 4H Clubs in the Southern Diocese.

The second phase of the Western Iowa Synods' partnership with CAD is beginning. Those in attendance made pledges of support of over \$130,000 that Sunday evening. Before this second phase of our partnership with the Center of Agricultural Development is completed in 2015 it is hoped that the amount given will rise to \$350,000. The meeting closed with over 150 of the attendees in a line that rhythmically snaked its way around the rows of tables singing "We are marching in the light of God" as the wait staff watched in stunned amazement. To learn more, feel free to contact the Niensens and the Holmers.



Recent donations to the Memorial Fund include ~

- **Tom Chicone** (Sandy Peterson's brother) ~ From friends...\$10.00
- **Anita Haase** ~ From Friends...\$5.00

## THIS MONTH'S CALENDAR

**December 1:** 9:00 a.m. Quilt Work Day. Laurie Gunder is the hostess.

**December 4:** 6:00 p.m. Women of the ELCA Advent Potluck/Program. Program committee members are Betty Murphy, Joan Wiemann and Kathy Jansen. Hostesses are Beryl Soderberg, Marcia Sundet and Lila Smith.

**NOTE:** The Executive Committee will meet following for a quick meeting to distribute funds to charities.

**December 6:** 7:30 p.m. Priscilla Circle will meet. Kathy Jansen will be the hostess and a Bible Study leader has been assigned for December.

**December 13:** 9:30 a.m. Rebecca Circle meets at the church. The group will discuss the lesson together.

**December 15:** 1:30 p.m. Sarah Circle will meet at the church with Laurie Gunder serving as hostess and Marilyn Nielsen leading the Bible Study.



*"Who is the King of Glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory!" Psalms 18:10*

I hope you all had a chance to attend the Thankoffering Service. Each service had different Women of the ELCA members helping out. Thank you to each of you. It is the way the different parts of our group come together to become one, that is one reason I so love this group. To our quilters, the church always looks so special when your efforts look like your arms opening to welcome the congregation.

This year in my family, we have two young women, that are pregnant and due to deliver yet this year. Seeing them makes me think of Mary. What must this time have been like for her. And for Joseph, when he knew that he wasn't really the father. Imagine his faith. What must it have meant to have him believe her story of the conception? As the song says, "Did you know? Your Son would walk on water." This song has become one of my favorites. If you don't know this song, take time to truly listen when you hear it next time. What an amazing miracle! What an amazing time of year! I think we need this wonderful season to get us through this cold, dreary time of year.

Birthdays are to be *"Celebrate(d) by feast"* Genesis 40:20.

Please make sure you join our annual Women of the ELCA Family Advent celebration on Sunday, December 4. We will start with Potluck (YUM!) followed by a special Advent service. Come celebrate Jesus' Birthday with your First Lutheran family.

The Executive Board will have a QUICK meeting, immediately following this service for the purpose of distributing our funds.

Remember, the 2012 schedule has been revamped. Women of the ELCA will NOT be holding a January meeting. Stay home, be safe, and be warm. We will be meeting in June instead. Please pick up your Women of the ELCA books early next year, from the table in front of Colleen's office.

Thank you for the opportunity of being your Women of the ELCA President this year. I would appreciate your continued prayers for next year. Many thanks to Jeanine Haack that has served as Treasurer and to Joan for serving as Secretary.

My Christmas card to you would say: May this special season allow you to remember and celebrate the real "reason for the season".

God Bless you and yours this Christmas and in the New Year. Remember to tell those you love, that you do. A Hug & Kiss go a long way... "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength" Psalms 18:1

In Christ's love,  
Dr. Judy Reinking



**WORLD HUNGER  
QUARTERS**

10-30	\$16.75
11-6	\$25.00
11-13	\$17.00
11-20	\$13.50
11-27	\$16.50

**TOTAL GIVEN IN 2011: \$796.75**  
**TOTAL GIVEN SINCE AUGUST 2001:**  
**\$9,003.50!!!**



Fly with **Lutheran Lakeside Camp** to Holden Village in the Washington Cascade Mountains. **August 18-28, 2012.** On the return we spend a full day touring Seattle. Join pilgrims where Christ is the center of daily life. Each day is framed by matins, and community vespers. Christian fellowship is in abundance. Bell and vocal choirs, Bible study, crafts, hiking, fishing, pottery and weaving. Contact: Ranger Z at 712-336-2109 or [z@lutheranlakeside.com](mailto:z@lutheranlakeside.com)

**WORK GROUP PROJECTS - 2011**

On behalf of the Quilt Work Group, I would like to update the congregation on our work this year. This report is from January 1 through November 1, 2011.

Items made:

- 86 Big Quilts
- 16 Baby Quilts
- 2 Lap Robes
- 13 School Bags
- 1 Banner from Tanzania

Items sent to Lutheran World Relief:

- 43 Big Quilts
- Six pounds of soap

Items given away:

- 5 Big Quilts to Christmas Adopted Families
- 2 Big Quilts for the Youth Auction
- 3 Baby Quilts to baptized infants
- 3 Cards/crosses to our Graduates
- Flowers to shut-ins for May Day
- Christmas Cards for Servicemen
- 1 Big Quilt for Jim Simpson's auction
- \$100 to help with shipping for LWR

We would like to thank everyone that has helped financed this project otherwise we wouldn't be able to continue. The donations are very encouraging.

Thank you.  
Beryl Soderberg



**FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN  
CHURCH MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND**

The Mission Endowment Fund originated in March 2003 and has grown to a balance of \$110,886 on 10/31/11. The central role of the Mission Endowment Fund is to enhance the mission outreach of the congregation. It is to fund mission work at home and around the world above and beyond the programs supported through regular offerings. In order to do that, the fund needs to grow and that is where members of our congregation can help.

Only income & capital gains may be distributed from the Mission Endowment Fund. All donor contributions stay within the fund. Several organizations have received support including:

- Operation Bootstrap (sending an African woman to college for 2 years- \$2,500 & \$2,770)
- Three organizations received support in 2011: \$1,000 to Algona Food Pantry, \$500 to ELCA Malaria Campaign & \$500 to Western Iowa Synod for Tanzania Igumbilo Dormitory fire repairs

Donations to the Mission Endowment Fund may be given in many forms:

- bequests (a designation in one's will or living trust)
- life insurance or annuity proceeds (through a beneficiary designation or a gift of the policy itself)
- Transfers of property such as cash, stocks, bonds or real estate
- Memorial gifts
- Beneficiary designation in an IRA or other retirement plan

Feel free to contact any Mission Endowment Fund Board member with questions. The Board is Paul Johnson, Don Hansen, Dave VanDeventer, Ray Nielsen, Pastor Marsha and Kristie Brown.

Remember the Mission Endowment Fund as you consider your 2011 year-end income tax planning!

**PROPOSED BYLAW**

Below is the proposed bylaw to be voted on at the January annual meeting:

BE IT RESOLVED by the congregation of First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iowa, that the following Bylaw be added to the Constitution of First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Algona, Iowa:

**Membership: E.1.**

**Removal from the roll due to inactivity demonstrated by having not completed both of the following for a period of two years:**

- a. participated in Holy Communion**
- b. made a contribution of record to this congregation's treasury**

**Said member shall be given written notice that their membership is about to terminate and the reasons for said termination of membership shall be clearly stated.**

**Membership may be maintained if a response is received from the member within the 30 day timeframe indicating a desire to remain active, however, both of the above acts must be completed for membership to remain active.**

**If at any time, after due and diligent search, a correct address is unable to be located for any existing member, the member will be automatically removed from the roll.**



Our records show that the following members celebrate birthdays and anniversaries in December. We pray for their health and happiness as we share in their celebration. We appreciate being notified of any errors or omissions.

- 12-1 Conley Nelson
- 12-2 Bruce Sundet
- 12-4 Josh Adams, Donna Meyerink
- 12-5 Margo Adams, Haley Johnson
- 12-6 Justin Conner, Pat Conner, Dave Sandven, Josh Sandven
- 12-7 Raegan Engelbarts
- 12-10 Beryl Soderberg
- 12-11 Kay Kinseth, Julie Collison, Dana Haverkamp
- 12-13 Wes Brynsaas
- 12-14 Chris Gunderson, Marcia Sundet
- 12-15 Susan Legore, Laura Zwiefel, Alexis Bryant, Laurene Gunder
- 12-16 James Adams
- 12-18 Bryan Claude
- 12-19 Julie Johnson, Peg Lenz
- 12-23 Ray Nielsen
- 12-24 Holly Nixt, Merlin Beenken
- 12-25 Dave Jenson, Sophie Bonnstetter
- 12-26 Bill Fjetland
- 12-27 Kenton Moss, Teri Curry
- 12-28 Jerry Brown, Julie Buyck
- 12-29 LeAnn Boyken
- 12-30 Brooklyn Barber
- 12-31 Robin Habeger, Jason Braun

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO...

- 12-7 Steve & Karen Evenson (43 years)
- 12-10 Al & Julie Buyck (34 years)
- 12-12 Kurt & Jodie Knoner (13 years)
- 12-21 Brian & Brenda Erickson (15 years)
- 12-30 John & Ardis Lande (50 years)  
Steve & Tricia Metzger (12 years)
- 12-31 Dave & Sandi Markla (46 years)  
Steve & Karen Cauley (6 years)



A big THANK YOU to:

- those who furnished bars or served the memorial luncheon for family and friends of Anita Haase. Many of you have fond memories of Anita and we were glad that we could have a time of fellowship after her memorial service.
- everyone who helped serve or clean up after the 'Giving Out of an Abundant Heart' potluck. The volunteer help for clean up was truly amazing!
- Sandy and Bette Schenck who donated needed kitchen utensils.

WELCA Mission Service

**UPCOMING CONTEMPORARY  
WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

**December 10  
December 31**



## HOLY COMMUNION

December 3 & 4, 2011  
 December 17 & 18, 2011  
 December 24 & 25, 2011  
 December 31 & January 1, 2012

### Bake Bread

December 3/4 & 17/18: Marlis Beenken  
 December 24: Jean Davis, Connie Mechler

### Preparation & Clean-up

December 3/4 & 17/18: Kay Kinseth  
 December 24: Jean Davis, Connie Mechler

### Communion Assistants for December

December 3 (5:30 pm): Gen Blumer  
 December 4 (8:00 am): Mark Meyer  
 December 4 (10:30 am): Julie Murphy  
 December 17 (5:30 pm): Kathy Nelson  
 December 18 (8:00 am): Derald Goetz  
 December 18 (10:30 am): Brian Meyerink  
 December 24 (4:00 pm): **Volunteer**  
 December 24 (7:00 pm): **Volunteer**  
 December 25 (10:30 am): Susan Legore  
 December 31 (5:30 pm): Marilyn Nielsen  
 January 1, 2012: (10:30): Dave VanDeventer

### Communion Assistants for January

January 1, 2012: (10:30): Dave VanDeventer  
 January 14 (5:30 pm): Al Buyck  
 January 15 (8:00 am): April Braun  
 January 15 (10:30 am): Jean Davis

## FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS

We are looking for a responsible person(s) to open up the Kossuth County Food Pantry at 12:45 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; the volunteer is to make sure the pantry is "ready" before it is opened for food distribution (these tasks take a total of approximately 15 to 20 minutes per day).

Tasks include:

- Making sure pantry distribution volunteers are present
- Making sure eggs and milk have been restocked in distribution refrigerator.

If you are interested in this volunteer opportunity, please contact Erby Shipler at the Kossuth County Food Pantry at 515-395-2273. *A group of individuals/couples could also rotate this responsibility.*

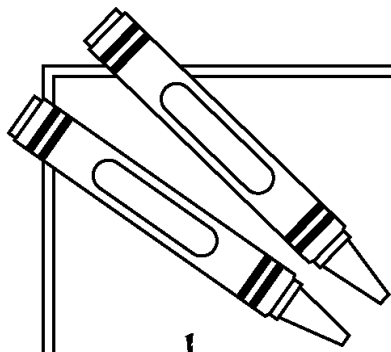


- Pancake Mix
- Pancake Syrup
- Cans of Tuna
- Canned Beef Stew

Items may be placed in the grocery cart in the south hallway or delivered to the Algona Food Pantry.



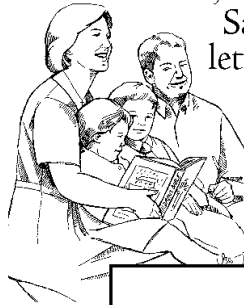
**Alex Habeger, in Iraq**  
**Erik Kloster, in Oklahoma**  
**Paul Lenz, in Washington (state)**  
**Gary Schaffer, in Afghanistan**  
**Brian Thacker, in Germany**



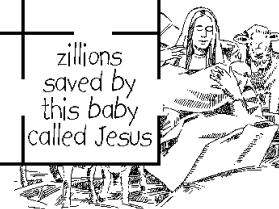
# Just for **KIDS**

## The Story of Jesus' Birth

Jesus' birth is recorded in three New Testament chapters: Matthew 1 and 2, and Luke 2. Follow some important words about our Savior's birth by starting at a word beginning with the letter **A** and finishing with a word starting with the letter **Z**.



	angels	Bethlehem	car	dance	easel
cat	bear	child	donkey	egg	fast
holy	glory	flocks	Earth	feathers	gap
inn	jacket	grapes	peace	quiet	hat
Joseph	king	Lord	only	righteous	shepherds
kelp	loop	Mary	night	unique	tidings
last	maze	paper	wise men	virgin	water
open	nest	word	eXcitement	young	zillions saved by this baby called Jesus



Answer: angels, Bethlehem, child, donkey, Earth, flocks, glory, holy, inn, Joseph, king, Lord, Mary, night, only, peace, quiet, righteous, shepherds, tidings, unique, virgin, wise men, eXcitement, young, zillions saved by this baby called Jesus)

## SIXTY PLUS POTLUCK



### *Sixty Plus*

The December 9 the Sixty Plus Potluck will be a time of fellowship, good food, and singing our favorite Christmas carols. If you wish, please bring a Christmas memory, poem, reading or ornament to share. If you would like to be a part of a friendly group, please join us during the noon hour on December 9! Please bring a dish to share as well as your own table service.



*Anita Marion Haase*

*January 16, 1923 ~ September 7,  
2001*

*Memorial service held at  
First Lutheran Church  
November 7, 2011*

## A CHRISTMAS TAPESTRY

"Christmas reminds us we are not alone. We are not unrelated atoms, bouncing and ricocheting amid aliens, but are a part of something, which holds and sustains us. As we struggle with shopping lists and invitations, compounded by December's bad weather, it is good to be reminded that there are people in our lives who are worth this aggravation, and people to whom we are worth the same. Christmas shows us the ties that bind us together, threads of love and caring, woven in the simplest and strongest way within the family."  
~ Donald E. Westlake

## THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

A few years ago, my Christmas season centered on the arrival of a baby — our second child, due December 23. Exhausted with pregnancy, I skipped out on holiday gatherings, did less decorating and baking than usual, didn't send cards and didn't plan a holiday dinner, assuming — correctly, it turned out — I'd be in the hospital then.

It was a strangely quiet Christmas season, with our focus on the impending arrival. But once our baby was born, in the last hour of Christmas Day, all the missed parties, caroling, cookie-indulging and even present-opening paled in comparison. All that truly mattered was God's gift to our family of this one very special baby.

Isn't this how Christmas should always be? Seasonal activities are fun, but they hold meaning only if they deepen our focus on the coming of one very special Baby — the Christ-Child. Hold him in your heart this season, as I held my newborn that Christmas night. If the hustle and bustle distracts you from the Baby, put an end to it. If traditional activities prove more stressful than joyous, consider what you can let go of to embrace the true meaning of Christmas — the birth of Jesus, God's gift of love.  
~ Heidi Mann

**BULLETINS FROM  
TRAVELING WORSHIPPERS**

If you have been traveling and would like to share the bulletin from the church of which you visited, please drop it off in the church office at your convenience. Every month in the newsletter we will note all our travelers.

October 23, 2011: Shirley Johnson attended the Valley Church in Des Moines, Iowa.

October 23, 2011: The Al Klepper family attended worship at the First Lutheran Church in Duluth, Minnesota.

November 20, 2011: Paul & Susan Doster attended the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary worship service at Peace Lutheran Church in Pella, Iowa.

**MANGER HEART**

God came to Earth  
In the Christmas birth  
Of a tiny baby boy, whose life and death  
Are redeeming us yet  
With blessings, grace and joy.

Our minds may know this history,  
But stand in awe at mystery.  
So faith becomes the way  
To make our hearts like "manger hearts"  
Where Christ can dwell and God imparts  
His wondrous love each day.

Peggy Ferrell



**CHURCH OF THE DAMASCUS ROAD**

We had five members attend services at the Church of the Damascus Road on Wednesday, November 9. They a guest preacher that was unable to be present, so two of the inmates did the sermon on short notice, and did a wonderful job.

They asked for feedback from others in attendance and following the discussion Pastor Stone offered communion for all in attendance.

This is a Mission Outreach for First Lutheran Church. We encourage ALL members to attend and experience your mission dollars at work.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Church of the Damascus Road was held at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Rockwell City on Sunday, November 13.

A meeting of Aftercare/Reentry Reintegration was held prior to the meeting. Two former inmates spoke and expressed their appreciation for all the benefits the program has helped them with since their release.

Pastor Stone opened the meeting with devotions and introductions of the many people involved in Church of the Damascus Road and Aftercare.

The income is dependent on donations from churches and individuals. Thanks for extended to all. First Lutheran is a \$100 per month contributor.

**God can do great things  
with our lives, if we but  
give them to him in  
sincerity."**

**~ Anna R. Brown Lindsay**

# SATURDAY SERVERS

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## GREETERS

Dec. 3	Jim & Sharol Hefti	Jan. 7
Dec. 10	Julie Collison, Connie Farnham	Jan. 14
Dec. 17	Betty Murphy, Jen Sadler	Jan. 21
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve	Jan. 28
Dec. 31	Clark & Pat Conner	

## GREETERS

Don & Beth Egel
Mark & Joan Wiemann
Vern & Kathy Nelson
Bruce & Kim Knudsen

## ACOLYTES

Dec. 3	Rebekka Voss	Jan. 7
Dec. 10	Alexis Bryant	Jan. 14
Dec. 17	Hannah Sadler	Jan. 21
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve	Jan. 28
Dec. 31	Myra Meyer	

## ACOLYTES

Hannah Sadler
Rebekka Voss
Morgan VanZante
Rachel Meyer

## LECTORS

Dec. 3	Reggie Alt	Jan. 7
Dec. 10	Bruce Knudsen	Jan. 14
Dec. 17	Jodie Knoner	Jan. 21
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve	Jan. 28
Dec. 31	Dan Peterson	

## LECTORS

Tom Lipps
Rodney Meyer
Jayne Lipps
Mark Lenz

## USHERS

Dec. 3	Brian & Sande Rodemeyer	Jan. 7
Dec. 10	Larry & Gen Blumer	Jan. 14
Dec. 17	Vern & Kathy Nelson	Jan. 21
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve	Jan. 28
Dec. 31	Bruce & Kim Knudsen	

## USHERS

Bruce & Marcia Sundet
Jim & Sharol Hefti
Dave & Sandi Markla
Gerald & Laura Zwiefel

Please remember that if you can't serve, you are to find your own replacement and notify the Church Office so the change may be printed in the bulletin.

Thank you!

## COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE NOTES

The Congregation Council met on November 8, 2011 for a Congregation Council meeting. Present: Al Buyck, Donna Meyerink, Brian Meyerink, Nathan Countryman, Jim Hefti, April Braun, Keith Dwire, Colleen Teeuwe, and Pastor Marsha Smith. Absent: Kevin Benschoter, Jean Davis, Mark Meyer, Bill Lenz and Tony Wiita.

### Old Business

- **Injury Policy:** Tony Wiita will bring an update to the December meeting.
- **Nominating Committee Update:** At the last meeting the group went through the job description and roles for the Committee members. Next meeting will be Tuesday, November 15 and they will all share recommendations for potential Council/Committee members.

### New Business

- **Annual Meeting:** The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 22, 2012 after the 10:30 a.m. worship.
- **Worship Quality:** A plan will be implemented for when there are computer issues during worship. Steps are being taken to remedy the Easy Worship program and sound system issues.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Worship and Music

Twelve members were present. Discussion was held on the worship service flow on how we can help people worship better. A plan will be implemented for when the computer has issues as well as sound issues. Another usher training may be needed in the future.

### Property Committee

Four members were present. The committee has received bids for the new sign out front. Shed construction was discussed and tabled/postponed as we do not have enough funds set aside for the project at this time. Discussed the budget for the Stewardship Committee. Discussion for a light bulb changer was tabled until next month's meeting.

### Christian Education

Four members present. Discussed plans to get the Messiah's Matinee room completed. We will be meeting on December 28 to paint, make window coverings, and put up movie posters. Next room to complete will be Bible Adventure in January. Christmas program practices will begin during Sunday School hour on November 20, December 4 and 11. The program will be directed by the Christian Education Committee and Colleen.

### Youth Ministry

Five members present. We had an Oktoberfest recap and discussed ideas for the next year. The Committee would like to have a speaker system for the Fellowship Hall that would accept a microphone and an Ipod or other device to play music. On our wish list: a 50-inch flat screen for the Youth Room. Upcoming events include: family bowling in Humboldt. Live Greeting Card Windows with the KICK kids from 6:00-7:00 p.m. that night and the Campaigners from 7:00-8:00 p.m. December 4 will be Christmas decorating after the 10:30 a.m. worship with April's chili to follow. Two ski trips will be scheduled: one for BASIC and one for Campaigners. Soup-Off date was set for Saturday, February 11 after worship. Other dates for fundraisers were discussed for 2012.

### Stewardship/Finance

Six members were present. All reports were reviewed and approved. Week one of the Stewardship Campaign was very successful. Bruce Knudsen did a good job with his temple talk. October was an expensive month for maintenance repair. Reviewed budget requests.

### Evangelism/Social Ministry

Four members were present. Our Adopted Highway ditches were cleaned thanks to: John & Beverly Nordman, Sandy Peterson, Karilyn Claude, Dave VanDeventer, and Joan Wiemann. Ray & Marilyn Nielsen and Pastor Mark & Linnea Holmer attended the Center for Agriculture Development program held in Spencer on November 6. Church of the Damascus Road visit will be November 9 and five people are signed up to attend. The Church of the Damascus Road annual meeting will be Sunday, November 13 and Ray & Marilyn Nielsen will attend. Discussion was held on the number of adopted Christmas families to adopt.

### WHAT TO GIVE?

- To your enemy, forgiveness.
- To an opponent, tolerance.
- To a friend, your heart.
- To a customer, service.
- To all men, charity.
- To every child, a good example.
- To yourself, respect.

~ Oren Arnold



Attendance and Offering Report

### NOVEMBER 2011

#### ATTENDANCE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>	<u>SUNDAY</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
10-30	42 (CW)	96	138
11-6	39	113	152
11-13	38 (CW)	117	155
11-20	33	119	152
11-27	41 (CW)	107	148

#### 2011 OFFERINGS

10-30	\$9,838.25
11-6	\$4,678.00
11-13	\$4,572.24
11-20	\$2,781.20
11-27	\$7,839.50
Received in 2011	<b>\$234,943.02</b>
Pledged in 2011	<b>\$267,587.44</b>



"He's today's greeter."

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**Organist**

*Linnea Holmer*

**Choir Directors**

*Todd Herbst-Ulmer*  
*Julie Murphy*  
*Chris VanDeventer*

**Contemporary Music**

**Director**  
*Kurt Kissinger*

**Custodians**

*Carolyn Mosher*  
*Bob Speich*

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**December**