



CrossWinds

## NEWSLETTER OF WINDS OF THE PRAIRIE

BETHANY : BETHANY-ELIM : GRACE : PEACE : ST PAUL

DECEMBER 2011

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## FIRST WORD: IN CHRIST, ALL THINGS ARE MADE NEW

PASTOR JULIE A. K. ANDERSON

The Year of Mark is the gospel of our new lectionary year on November 27 with the first Sunday in Advent. Mark is a straightforward storyteller who begins in the middle of things with John the Baptist and ends with an open ended telling. There are no long discourses, parables, sermons or teachings for Mark has Jesus on the move, immediately. God's kingdom is here and now, let me show it to you. Therefore, his telling of Jesus' story is one where all are asked to see with new eyes and hear with new ears what God is up to in Jesus the Christ. In this way the first of the Gospels set the stage for future tellings by the other writers.

The community of Mark's Gospel sounds a lot like us. Rural, away from the centers of political power but feeling like much of the burden of taxation and the means to support everybody was on their shoulders. So a message of God doing something new can ring in the lives of today's people as they did in the time of Mark as we read.

Mark is a short, action packed story that can be read in about an hour. It would be a good exercise and a gift to yourself to read it in its entirety in one sitting in Advent. As the first gospel written it leaves out details and parts of the story of Jesus that the other gospel writers like Matthew, Luke and John then added. Yet, as the first gospel his framework is used by the others as a sort of standard or reference.

Mark wants to tell the story of Jesus Christ as a means to answer many of the questions that early believers had about Jesus as seen in the epistles, the letters to the early churches. He want there to be a written record of the eyewitness account that he was privilege to see, hear and record. He invites us to come along and even to continue the story, as the traditional ending has the women leaving the empty tomb in fear.

The symbol for the Gospel of Mark is the lion of Judah, the one calling out with a mighty roar the proclamation of God's Word made flesh. When you read the entire gospel you begin to see that words are important. Words and actions are central to the telling for when Jesus speaks things happen and when others speak they usually end up declaring the wonders of Jesus. It is the contrast of Jesus' words and actions in relation to those of the religious authorities that gives Mark's gospel its tension.

The events of the gospel lead to the big event the crucifixion. As you read how ponder how the actions of Jesus lead us to this event? The last words of Mark's gospel are the beginning of a new story, for the first witnesses to the empty tomb are told:

*Mark 16:6 "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"*

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CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE This is one of the many new things that Jesus does which can be seen and heard in Mark's words. May we see with Mark how the world is made new with the good news of Jesus, that God sees us all as new through the actions of his Son. Let Mark help us all to sense the presence of God with us today in his telling of Jesus' story which we continue to tell anew today.

## NOTES FROM THE INTERN

VICAR BAILEY LANDA

"So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them." Luke 2:4-7

One of my favorite versions of the Christmas story is called "The Three Trees". Now I will only tell you part of it, because it contains a tree that has to deal with Jesus calming the sea and a tree that is important in the Easter story. And maybe another day, I will tell you about the other two.

Once upon a time there were three little trees, growing as tall as could be on top of a mountain. Day after day, they dreamed of what they could become when they grew up. The first tree looked to heaven and said, "I want to be a treasure chest, covered in gold, holding the most precious gifts in all the world."

One day, 3 lumberjacks came to cut down the three trees. The first lumberjack came up to the first tree, looked up at

her, and said, "This tree is perfect for me!" The tree smiled, because her dream was about to come true. When she arrived in the woodshop, she was carved into a feed box for animals. She was filled with hay and food for the hungry animals, not gold and jewels like she had dreamed.

One night, a bright star shone brightly over the feedbox as a young woman placed her newborn baby into the makeshift cradle. The husband whispered to the wife that he wished he could have a cradle for him. But she just squeezed his hand and said, "The manger is perfect." At that moment, the first tree knew that she was holding the most precious treasure of them all.

The Christmas story contains one of the most beautiful gifts that we have ever received. The gift of Jesus, who was brought to us as a Savior for all the people. One of the greatest wonders of this story is God making himself present to us through Jesus. In some ways, we become like the tree in this story. We are hoping for this majestic gift to come wrapped in gold and having the best room in the 5 star hotel. When we realize that the gift has been placed in a manger, which was built as a feed box, we realize that in that manger holds that greatest gift of them all.



### CHRISTMAS COOKIE WALK

DATE: **December 10, 2011**

PLACE: **Bethany Lutheran, Arco**

TIME: **9 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

Cookies will be available for sale. Coffee and cookies will also be available along with a chance to visit with friends.

# PASTOR'S REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2011

Worship	Education	Meetings	Pastoral Acts	Visits
25 - Sundays Worships Total	7 - Bible/Book Study	4 - Council/Meeting	1 - Funeral	15 - Home
5 - Nursing Home	1 - Acolyte	1 - WELCA	3 - Baptism	3 - Hospital
5 - Saturday Night	Training	1 - WXY	6 - Counseling	2 - Public Events
	3 - TFA	3 - Synod	1 - Wedding	
	1 - Education			

## DECEMBER PREACHING SCHEDULE

<i>Worship Times Change</i>	Peace (8:30)	Bethany-Elim (8:30)	Grace (10:30)	Bethany (8:30)	St. Paul (10:30)
<b>Sat, Dec 3</b> <i>Holy Communion</i>				Anderson	
<b>Sun, Dec 4</b> <i>Holy Communion</i>	Anderson	Rasmusson	Anderson	Landa	Landa
<b>Sat, Dec 10</b> <i>Holy Communion</i>	Rasmusson				
<b>Sun, Dec 11</b> <i>Service of the Word</i>	Rasmusson	10:30 Program- Rasmusson	Landa	Anderson	Anderson
<b>Sat, Dec 17</b> <i>Holy Communion</i>		Landa			
<b>Sun, Dec 18</b> <i>Holy Communion</i>	Landa	Anderson	Anderson	Rasmusson	Rasmusson
	<b>Peace 5pm</b>	<b>Bethany Elim 7 pm</b>	<b>Grace 4 pm</b>	<b>Bethany 10:30 pm</b>	<b>St Paul 4 pm</b>
<b>Sat Dec 24</b>	Anderson	Rasmusson/Landa	Rasmusson	Anderson	Landa
<b>Sun Dec 25</b> <i>Christmas Day Holy Communion</i>	Anderson	Rasmusson	Rasmusson	Landa	Landa

## "SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE"

Are you facing the holidays without someone you love? Hartquist Funeral Homes - Utoft-Johansen Chapel in Tyler and Lake Benton invites you to our annual holiday "Service of Remembrance." The service centers on keeping memories of loved ones alive and helping us endure the pain that the holidays can bring following a death. This service is open to everyone. Please join us on Sunday, December 4, at 1:30pm at the Tyler Chapel, 116 East Bradley Avenue. Refreshments will be served. If you have questions, please call [507-247-3816](tel:507-247-3816) or [507-368-9385](tel:507-368-9385).

## COMMUNICATIONS

When calling the Winds of the Prairie Ministry Office please use either the 507-694-1238 or 1-866-944-9687 (WotP). Outside of office hours the Bethany-Elim number (507-694-1353) is usually forwarded to the pastor on call and can be accessed from the 1238 voicemail.



## DECEMBER SPLASH!

WOW - Can't believe it is already Advent again!

Our December SPLASH event is on December 4<sup>th</sup> from 1:30-3:00pm at Bethany-Elim Lutheran Church in Ivanhoe. *This is an event for the whole family!* We will be talking about the different G.I.F.T.S (Giving in Faith to Serve) of Advent. The afternoon will include a worship, the story of St. Nicholas, the three gifts to Jesus, and the meaning behind the 4 Advent candles.



Our TFA Youths have been working hard to come up with craft ideas and activities to share. Come Join us celebrate the Festival of St. Nicholas!

## SERVING AND LIVING

Greetings in the name of Jesus! We are delighted to invite you to a congregational event, "Thriving & Serving in the Name of Christ." This one-day event will help spark conversation about living as a community with Christ at our center. This event will be invaluable for all rostered leaders, congregational presidents and council members; and, in particular, to congregations who have called a pastor who is in his/her first-call. Thanks to a generous grant from the ELCA Board of Pensions we are able to offer this to all in the Southwestern Minnesota Synod.

***Using the Board of Pensions "Living Well Day" as our model, we will use the "That You May be Well Together" curriculum:***

**Part 1:** Tools and Best-Practices for Supporting a Healthy Culture to Grow Disciples

**Part 2:** Discerning our Call to Serve as Christ-Centered Congregations

**Part 3:** The Gifts of Congregations with First-Call Pastors

**December 3rd, 2011**

Christ Lutheran, Slayton, MN

9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

(2:30pm-4:00pm First Call Conversations)

For more information go to <http://library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1101381912633-682/Thriving&Serving.pdf>

## WOMEN OF FAITH 2012

Looking for a present for that hard-to-buy-for lady in your life this Christmas season? How about giving her a weekend away to become refreshed and renewed? Whether she already knows Jesus as her Savior or she doesn't know anything at all about God's amazing love, Women of Faith weekend is the trip for her. Join 10,000 other females rejoicing in God's love. Women of Faith 2012 takes place in St. Paul, MN on October 19-20, 2012. Purchase a gift certificate to put under the tree for her. Package includes: ticket, hotel room and transportation. Contact Rebecca Behnke at 507-828-8837 for more information.

## CANBY AREA WOMEN OF FAITH: HOMELESSNESS

Imagine being homeless at Christmas. For most of us this festive period is a time to relax and enjoy being with our families, but for hundreds of thousands of people around the country, Christmas merely underlines an uncertain future. With no permanent home, how can homeless people plan the rest of their lives?

Did you know that in Minnesota there are 20,000 people who are homeless right now? Some of those people are right in our backyard in Lincoln, Lyon, Yellow Medicine and Lac Qui Parle Counties. These may be people who we encounter every day without realizing that they are homeless. Canby Area Women of Faith doesn't just touch lives in Canby, Minnesota, it touches lives in every city of these counties. We are committed to helping find homes and/or places for these people to stay. There is currently a

family living in the rural area in a shed on someone's property. It has no electricity and no water. Over the last week, as the snow and cold came, they spent several nights in their car as it was warmer there than in the shed. During the day they are using a propane heater in an attempt to stay warm. On the coldest days, the warmest the heater is able to keep the shed is 54 degrees. Winter weather is on its way, and these people need a place to live. These individuals want to work, but how do you go to a job interview when you haven't showered in days? We are asking if you would prayerfully consider making a donation of whatever you are able this holiday season to help individuals to stay warm. Contact Rebecca Behnke at 507-828-8837 with inquiries or to find out how you can help.

## WORLD AIDS EMPHASIS SUNDAY DECEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>

World AIDS Day is December 1<sup>st</sup>. This day often is not observed by us, but in many countries, including South Africa, it is a day to encourage testing, to promote awareness and education, to advocate for funds for research leading to a cure, and to demonstrate compassion for those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. The 2011 theme is "It takes a village to fight HIV/AIDS".

Our Companion Synod, the Southeastern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, on Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup> (2011) will include in their liturgy a litany, mindful of the many who are HIV+, those who have developed full-blown AIDS, those who are care-givers, those who treat HIV/AIDS patients, those who do research, and those who have lost family members and friends to AIDS.

The HIV/AIDS Coordinator in the Diocese, whose work we (the SW MN Synod) support, has shared a litany with us that they will be using on the Sunday following World AIDS Day.



As a sign of our connection in Christ across the seas, on December 4<sup>th</sup> we will lift up our relationship with our sisters and brothers in our companion synod and the many world-wide and even in our midst who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Throughout Advent we will use prayers with an AIDS/HIV emphasis as we light the advent candles. We will have a bowl near the fountain in the fonts in which a special offering will be placed to support the on-going work of the HIV/AIDS

Coordinator in our companion synod of South Africa. You may place a special offering in the bowl or basket as you come forward for communion or as the bowl is passed during the opening hymn (on non-communion Sundays).

Our Conference is planning a trip to South Africa for this coming summer. Pastor Janet Colby of Canby and Pastor Lyle Snyder of Tyler are working with the Circuit in SA to finalize dates. Watch for more information.



## MISSION EMPHASIS: LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

**Lutheran Disaster Response** is a collaborative ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ([ELCA](#)) and The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod ([LCMS](#)). Begun in 1972, following significant flooding from Hurricane Agnes in eastern Pennsylvania, Lutheran Disaster Response brings together the energy and efforts of Lutherans from around the country to respond to natural and human-caused disasters in the United States and its territories.

*We demonstrate Christ's compassion for all people by promoting hope, healing, and wholeness to disaster survivors.*

There are many ways you can become involved in this important ministry. Follow us here, on [Facebook](#), or on our e-mail list. Give of your talents to [financially support](#) the continued mission of disaster response, both now and for future events. Give of your time to serve as a [volunteer](#).

Together, we are all Lutheran Disaster Response.



## YOUTH PROTECTION GUIDELINES

These policies have been adopted to provide security for youths in the program. In addition, they serve to protect adult leadership from situations in which they are vulnerable to allegations of abuse. We'll include a couple each month for your information as an annual review for our ministry.

**Male and Female Advisors at All Coed** activities one of whom is the leader or teacher.

**Separate Facilities** for sleeping and toilets of male and female on and off church property. If this is not the case great care is to be taken to avoid violations of personal privacy.

**Respect Privacy** of persons for personal care such as bathing or changing clothing. Intrusion is limited to matters of health or safety. Respect of privacy includes the adult advisors personal privacy.

**Proper Attire is to be worn at all times.** Revealing or unsafe attire may result in being prohibited from participating in an activity or a request to change clothing.



## BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

### SUNDAY TEXTS FOR STUDY

Date	Old Testament	Psalms	New Testament	Gospel	Theme
Dec 4	Isaiah 40:1-11	85:1-2, 8-13	2 Peter 3: 8-15a	Mark 1:1-8	Second Sunday of Advent
Dec 11	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	126	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19-28	Third Sunday of Advent
Dec 18	2 Samuel 7:1-11,16	Luke 1:47-55	Romans 6:1-25-27	Luke 1:26-38	Fourth Sunday of Advent
Dec 24	Isaiah 9:2-7	96:1-13	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-20	Christmas Eve
Dec 25	Isaiah 62:6-12	97	Titus 3:4-7	John 1:1-14	Christmas Day
Jan 1	Number 6:22-27	8	Galatians 4:4-7	Luke 2:15-21	Name of Our Lord

**MEN'S BIBLE STUDIES:** Men are invited to gather at 7:30 am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday at Rusty's in Taunton and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in Ivanhoe at Bethany-Elim Lutheran Church.

**FRIDAY MORNING BREAKFAST STUDY:** Come to Bethany in Arco at 7 am for breakfast and Bible study.

**Wednesday morning Text Study** at 8:30 am at Grace Lutheran in Lake Benton includes a reading and discussion of the upcoming readings for the Sunday worship.

**Bible Study on Second and Fourth Tuesday at 10 am** will begin by focusing on the readings of the season that review for us the faithfulness of God's plan for the upcoming weeks.

**Women of Winds on Wednesday** Will meet this month on December 28 at 7:30 at Bethany-Elim in the Fireside Room. All the women of Winds of the Prairie Ministry are invited to this study of the Bible from the unique women's perspective.

## PASTORAL TASKS 2011-2012



It is the nature of the office of pastor to have certain tasks associated with it. These are laid out in a document called "Visions and Expectations" which sets for these tasks which are then adapted to the place where the pastor is called to minister. We thought we would share these eight areas of ministry with you over the next few months so you all understand what the Personnel committee has helped the pastors to determine as the needs of the Winds of the Prairie Ministry congregations.

<b>TASKS</b>	<b>ASSOCIATE PASTOR</b>	<b>LEAD PASTOR</b>
<p><b>Education / Life Long Christian Learning</b> Assist with First Communion and Bible Introduction Instruction, Sunday School - advise as requested.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bible Schools – advise as requested</li> <li>• Adult Ed – Bible Studies and other opportunities – lead and advise</li> <li>• Retreats – Seminars – Special Focus – Develop in cooperation with lead pastor</li> <li>• Cradle Roll - advise</li> <li>• Prayer Pals – advise</li> </ul>	<p>Marriage Encounter – Marriage101 Bible Study – continue and improve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate Lectionary Studies</li> <li>• With pastoral staff, initiate 3 Serendipity Study Small groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Men's Studies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Create one new Men's study.</li> <li>➤ Continue to support the two existing men's s</li> </ul> <p><b>Training for affirmation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Developing a study group for evaluation of existing program.</li> <li>➤ A. Focus on Mentor training –</li> <li>➤ B. Evaluate Training for Affirmation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Trustees/administration:</b> Primary responsibility for record keeping of the congregations and parish</p> <p>Pastors to advise the following in consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church Councils and Parish councils</li> <li>• Special meetings as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue Council devotions development</li> <li>➤ Continue to update congregational records: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establish and train record keepers for each congregation</li> <li>➤ Create Parish Database</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The Lead Pastor shall have supervisory responsibility of all parish staff.</li> <li>❖ The Lead Pastor shall facilitate the work of the Personnel Committee</li> <li>❖ The Lead pastor shall have primary responsibility for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Budgeting process</li> <li>➤ Congregational Records</li> <li>➤ Weekly Staff meetings</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## Spiritual Gifts Inventory

God has given each Christian two vitally important gifts. The first is the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, his work of redemption, and thus forgiveness of sin. The second is the gift of one or more special abilities, which are to be used for the purpose of unifying the body of Christ and for the growth of God's Kingdom. These abilities are called spiritual gifts and they are received through our baptism.

Like other presents, it is impossible to fully appreciate and make use of our spiritual gifts until they have been opened. This tool will help you begin to open your spiritual gifts by guiding you through scripture review, scripture references, and self-assessment inventory.

Each month we'll give you the 3 inventory questions for several of the gifts. For each of the questions which follow, select the number that best matches how you perceive yourself.

Numerical scores are presented as:

- 4, consistently true
- 3, frequently true
- 2, occasionally true
- 1, infrequently true
- 0, rarely true

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Score: 0-4</b>
<b><u>Mercy</u></b>	
1. When I see a person in need, I am moved to assist them.	
2. I feel an urgency to provide housing for the homeless, food for the starving, comfort for those in distress.	
3. People have been surprised by how at ease I am while working with those who are suffering in mind, body or spirit.	
<b><u>Total for mercy</u></b>	
<b><u>Music-Vocal</u></b>	
1. I love to sing and enjoy inspiring others through song.	
2. I have sung before groups and felt a real sense of God's presence.	
3. I am grateful and humbled that my singing has provided inspiration and hope for others on their faith journey.	
<b><u>Total for music-vocal</u></b>	
<b><u>Music-Instrumental</u></b>	
1. I find joy and express myself by playing a musical instrument.	
2. By my playing a musical instrument, inspiration has been provided for both myself and others.	
3. Others have told me they were moved by my playing a musical instrument.	
<b><u>Total for music-instrumental</u></b>	
<b><u>Pastoring</u></b>	
1. I am motivated to provide spiritual leadership to those who are on a faith journey.	
2. I have responsibility for providing spiritual guidance to an individual believer or group of believers.	
3. People have come to me for spiritual help and it has developed into a long-term relationship.	
<b><u>Total for Pastoring</u></b>	

Scores of 7 or greater are considered strong gifts. Following are descriptions, biblical references and ministry suggestion for each gift. If any is a gift of yours use the resources below to learn more and discern how to use your gifts.

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**Mercy:** the gift that motivates a believer to feel deeply for those in physical, spiritual, or emotional need and then act to meet that need.

*Biblical References:* Luke 7:12-15, Luke 10:30-37, Matthew 25:34-36.

*Suggestions:* Home/Hospital/Institution Visitation, Transportation to Worship/Bible Study, Social Ministry Team, Support Group Leader, Telecare Minister

**Music--Vocal:** the gift that gives a believer the capability and opportunity to present personal witness and inspiration to others through singing. *Biblical References:* Psalm 96:1-9, Psalm 100:1-2, Psalm 149:1-2. *Suggestions:* Church Choir, Vocal Ensemble, Sunday School Song Leader, Vacation Bible School Song Leader

**Music--Instrumental:** the gift that inspires a believer to express personal faith and provide inspiration and comfort through the playing of a musical instrument. *Biblical References:* Psalm 33:1-5, Psalm 150, I Samuel 16:14-23. *Suggestions:* Band Leader/Member, Choir Pianist, Special Event Music, Substitute Organist, Vacation Bible School-Music Program

**Pastoring** (Shepherding): the gift that gives a believer the confidence, capability and compassion to provide spiritual leadership and direction for individuals or groups of believers. *Biblical References:* I Timothy 4:12-16, I Timothy 3:1-13, II Timothy 4:1-2. *Suggestions:* Adult In-Home Bible Study Leader, New Member Sponsor, Young-Adult Counselor, Small Group Leader, Telecare Minister

*Next month: Service, Teaching, Skilled Craft, and Wisdom.*

*All questions from the Spiritual Gifts Assessment at [elca.org](http://elca.org).*

## FAMILY FAITH

NANCY KROG

The family devotion below struck a chord with me for two reasons. 1.) Our home is filled with noise, at Christmastime and always. 2.) The Sunday School Christmas Program this year at BE is entitled, "Christmas: We're On the Air" and it mimics a live radio broadcast and the kids have to do lots of "sound effects". Kids love sound effects! Almost every time the word barn is mentioned, the kids need to make barn animal sounds...and they love to have permission to be loud! So let's make noise during this holiday season as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Don't be afraid to state your faith. Go Christmas caroling with your family or a group you are involved with. Be conscious of the reason for this very special holiday. Make noise in honor of our Lord and Savior! Merry Christmas!

### "NOISY CHRISTMAS"

**TODAY'S READING:** Luke 2:8-20

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests."

### FAITH WALK:

Walk to a busy holiday area such as a shopping mall, a downtown district, or a holiday display. Can you pick out any noises that celebrate the birth of the Christ Child? What noises celebrate secular things?

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### FAITH TALK:

How many noises can you think of that celebrated the birth of Jesus?

God sent people, angels, animals, and a star to celebrate Jesus' birth.

God celebrated Jesus' birth with music, words, offering, light, and prayer.

What Christmas celebrations forget the birth of Jesus? What Christmas celebrations remember the birth of Jesus?

What can you do to celebrate the birth of Jesus with joyous music?

### FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:

Christmas is the day we celebrate the birthday of Jesus. Have a birthday party for Jesus.

Write a family celebration cheer to rejoice that Christ has come.

Sing "Joy to the World"

Tell the Christmas story and get out your nativity set and let your children act out the story with the figurines.

Go Christmas caroling!

### OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE:

Dear God, Maker of Heaven and Earth, You used Your creation to announce and celebrate the birth of Your Son. Send Your Holy Spirit to create in our hearts and our home a spirit of celebration and joy at the birth of Your Son. In the name of our Savior, Amen.

*(Family Faith Walks, by Kelly J. Haack)*

## BETHANY, ARCO

### WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR DECEMBER

USHERS: Randy and Jewel Noble

ALTAR GUILD: Ruth Rasmussen

### BETHANY NEWS

GAYLE RASMUSSEN

The Holiday season is here and busy.

We are asking members of Bethany about Christmas Day services on Sunday, December 25, after Christmas Eve services

We are planning a different Christmas service with the youth, and it should be fun.

### BETHANY WELCA TO MEET

December 8<sup>th</sup> Bethany and Bethany-Elm WELCA group will meet at Bethany in Arco at 1:30pm for their annual Christmas party. Our program will be one of music, so come prepared to enjoy some Christmas singing. The women of Arco will provide a taste of Christmas goodies for lunch.

With the New Year coming, we all should ask ourselves how we can better serve Bethany and our community.

Our Annual Meeting is coming up in January. Keep this in mind.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

## BETHANY-ELIM, IVANHOE

### COUNCIL UPDATES FROM BETHANY-ELIM

SHARON RASMUSSEN

God's Love in Action!

A special thank you must be given to the Women of the ELCA as at a recent meeting, they voted to donate a sum for fuel expenses for our church this winter! That group has given generously to our church and parsonage in the past and we are so fortunate to have such dedicated Christian ladies in our church family.

Our new furnace is now installed in the parsonage, and we also found a "place" of need for our left over fuel oil in the parsonage barrel. A family from Lake Benton ran out of fuel last winter and were living with electric space heaters for heat. The fuel oil we are able to give them will help for a while.

Have a safe and joyous Holiday Season!

## GRACE, LAKE BENTON

### WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR JULY

**USHERS:** Gary Williams, Dennis Willert,  
Bob Worth, Jon Worth, Don Weets

**ALTAR GUILD:** Anne Lichtsinn

### GRACIOUS WORDS

KAREN LICHTSINN

During Thanksgiving, we gave thanks for the harvest and all our blessings, despite the challenges of 2011. Now let's move into the Christmas season with that same spirit of thankfulness and giving in our hearts. Christmas can be an exciting and busy time, but please remember others who are less fortunate. Pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering with unemployment, illness, financial challenges and loneliness. Consider the countless opportunities to reach out by sharing our time, talents and gifts. Some are as simple as calling a friend, visiting a neighbor, sending a card or letter to someone serving in the military, inviting someone to lunch, baking cookies for the homebound, sending a card to someone who is ill, visiting someone in the hospital or nursing home. We can also reach beyond our community by contributing to various charitable organizations, serving food for the homeless, contributing to Toys for Tots or Coats for Kids or volunteering at the local foodshelf. Be creative in your gift giving.....for the friend or family member who "has everything", consider making a charitable donation in their name as your gift this Christmas season. Please take the opportunity to share a part of yourself and spread the gift of love this Christmas season. God's work, Our Hands....all year long.

Merry Christmas

## B-E SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

NANCY KROG

Sunday, December 11 at 10:30 a.m. you will flash back in time to a live radio broadcast entitled, "Christmas, We're On the Air". Our Sunday School children will tell the wonderful story of Jesus' birth in a live broadcast! And you'll be clapping along too with live music! Please note change in worship time, church and program will be held at 10:30 a.m. with potluck dinner to follow, you are invited to bring a dish to pass. Beverages and paper products will be provided.

There will be no Sunday School December 25 and January 1. Sunday School will resume on January 8. Enjoy a special holiday with your family!

**ACOLYTES-** Dec 4th-Blaine Hefti;

Dec 11th-Adam Czech;

Dec 18th -Adrianna Johnson;

Dec 24th-Jaylen Miller and Jayla Prosch;

Dec 25th-Becca Berkenpas and Tyson Weets

## GLCW

**GLCW Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>** - 1:30-Fellowship Room; "What Christmas is"

Devotions: Garnet Petersen; Hostesses: Dorothy Henningsen and Gen Sportel

It's that time of year again...GLCW will again be doing cookie plates for singles and shut-ins. We are requesting 2 dozen cookies from everyone who would like to donate to this project. The date will be Wednesday December 7<sup>th</sup> during GLCW meeting. Thank you.

**No Block or Due Day during December.**

**Bible Study Meeting**-December 14<sup>th</sup> -Christmas Tea in Tyler

## GRACE LUTHERAN SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

PAT JOHNSON

We hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday. We truly have much to be thankful for. Each Sunday I am thankful for our dedicated teachers and the children who come to learn. This fall the children have been studying about Noah and Joseph, and the older children also learning about David and Daniel. Great learning lessons teaching us to trust in our God.

We also have been working on our catechism requirements, sending prayer cards and coloring pictures to those of concern to help brighten their day and let them know they are in our thoughts and prayers.

On Nov. 13, we started working on our Christmas program that is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 18 at 10:30 a.m. We invite everyone to church to join us in celebrating the birth of our Lord by watching our Christmas pageant and

helping us sing our traditional Christmas carols. We'd love to see a packed church!

Thank you God for sending your Son to save us all in such a special way. Happy birthday Jesus!

### UPCOMING DATES:

**Dec. 4, 11, & 18** - Sunday school starts at 8:30 am for Christmas program practice

**Dec. 10** - possible program practice 10:30 am with lunch served after practice -Pat will contact you if this is needed

**Dec. 18** - Christmas program during church at 10:30 am

**Dec. 25** - No Sunday school

**Jan. 1** - No Sunday school

## PEACE, RUTHTON

### NOTES AND DATES

**Tuesday, Dec 6, 9:30am** -- St. Matthew Circle meets at the Sunrise Manor Nursing Home with Carolyn Holck

**Tuesday, Dec 6, 2pm** -- St. Mark Circle meets at the home of Joyce Anderson

**Wednesday, Dec 7, 7pm** -- Church Council

**Monday, Dec 12, 5:30pm** -- St. John Circle meets at the Church

**Wednesday, Dec 14** -- PLCW -- The members of the PLCW are invited to attend the Christmas Tea at First English Lutheran, Tyler.

# ST PAUL, MINNEOTA

## ST PAUL'S NEWS

SUSAN BUYSSE

We want to thank our fellow St. Paul members who worked and/or provided for the Chili Supper held on November 13th. It was a success. This is also in part to the many members of Winds of the Prairie congregations who came to Minneota for food and fellowship. Your support means a great deal to us. We hope to have an inter-generational Christmas Program on December 18th. More information to be given at church services. Please see the Pastors/Vicar if you are able and willing to participate in this service. St. Paul's will be holding both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. Please refer to the schedule at the back of the newsletter for times.

Peace to all as we await the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER CONCERNS

### BETHANY (ARCO):

Pray for Dagmar Blegen, Elsie Barber, Kevin Hoftiezer (son of Ruth Rasmussen), and Harley Johnson (brother of Joan Lundberg)

### BETHANY-ELIM (IVANHOE):

Pray for the family of Bruce Leibfried. Pray for Arlinda Bednarek, Dennis Healy, Muriel Koopman, Rhoda Larson, Mavis Nielsen, Charmaine Lundberg, Dave Lawrence, Dennis Amundson, Ken Swanson, Brenda Sheik, Kevin Hoftiezer (brother of Dianna Weckert); Gabriel Johnson (Grandson of Norma Jean Johnson); Jonathan Niehaus; Leigh Jerzak; Michael Kropp; Jackson Nelson (son of Ryan & Kate Nelson); Kristi Morelan; Dareld Benz (brother of Mavis Nielsen); Nancy Resmen (sister-in-law of Bernadine Olsen); Linda Vlaminc (Sister-in-Law of Dave & Marlene Lawrence); and Mary Grace Nelson (daughter of Ryan & Kate Nelson).

### GRACE (LAKE BENTON):

Pray for Bud Knutson, Deloris Johansen, Dorothy Henningsen, Norma Burdick, Robert Boll; Joyce McColn (sister of Carl Burk); Rev. Gary Kubly (MN Senator); Paula Jacobson (Daughter of Wayne & Annette Fehrman); Earl Klitzke; and Chet Borresen

### PEACE (RUTHTON):

Pray for Bonita Fuhrmann, Marian Rupp, Herb Vinson, Carolyn Holck, Edna Haraldsen, Lavonne Fuhrmann, and Cliff Kittelson.

### ST. PAUL (MINNEOTA):

Pray for Niel Gunlogson, Lyall Gislason, Doris Richards, Clara DeRoode, & Crystal Gawarecki.

### TYLER NURSING HOME:

Marjorie Meyer, Grace Lutheran

Cliff Kittleson, Carolyn Holck, Harvey Christensen- Peace Lutheran

### HENDRICKS NURSING HOME:

Ila Rasmussen, Bethany Lutheran

### DIVINE PROVIDENCE NURSING HOME (IVANHOE):

Mabel Dressen, Bethany Lutheran

Elsie Barber, Bethany Lutheran

Dagmar Blegen, Bethany Lutheran

### MILITARY:

Pray for the leaders of this nation and all the nations of the world that all may seek peace. Pray for those family and friends of the members of WOTP who serve in the military or reserve forces, especially Matt Schaefer (in Kuwait); Lucas Oerter, Scott Johnson, Jon Dougherty, Christian Vizecky, Jon and Jack Healy, Danielle Thomsen, Michael Colman, Ross, Ryan, Angela, and David Nelson, Allan Peterson, Brook Brown, Derrick Linneman, Todd Board, Kyle Sheik, Alyson Bylone, Steve VandeBerg, Jim Pedersen, Justin Schmidt, Adam DeRoode, Pam Gregor, Paul Gregor, Jr., Corey Gregor, Christopher Gregor, Stephanie Christoffels, and Paul Gregor