

# St. John's Newsletter – December 2011

Phone: 320-392-5572 – Email: hancocklutheran@gmail.com – Website: HancockLutheran.org

## From His Word ...

How long the night lasted, tossing and turning in bed! More and more worries hounding the mind as the night dragged on. Life's troubles pressing in on every side like a pack of wolves. No rest for these weary eyes.

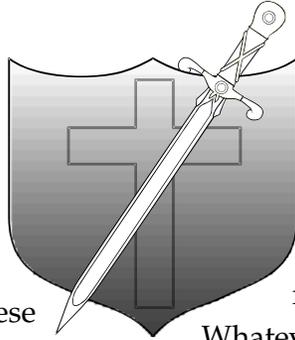
The repair bill for the car is four digits long. The kids dental checkups are due. Much of the Christmas shopping still needs to be done. The credit cards are already carrying a balance. Where's the money going to come from?

The family's running every which way. When was the last meal the whole family sat down for? When was the last real conversation beyond exchanging schedules and a little gossip? Even attending church together becomes hit and miss.

That stomach pain comes more often. Pepto-Bismol doesn't do the job. A doctor should take a look, but what might he say? Do I really need another problem to deal with, especially at this time of the year?

The worries and cares of life surround us. The closer to home they are, the fiercer the attack. Even when the children are grown and have children of their own, the worries continue – sometimes even more intense.

King David knew how troubles multiply. His dear son Absalom had rebelled and driven him from Jerusalem. Many of his people and soldiers, even a trusted adviser, joined Absalom (2 Samuel 15). Did guilt also attack David? His own sins against his family had sown these troubles (2 Samuel 11, 12). Did the taunts of "God won't help you"



pierce deep into his soul?

He calls out to the Lord. For the Lord is his shield. No matter how fierce the attacks, he is safe with the Lord. The Lord is his glory. Others slander his faith, but the Lord will not prove false. The Lord is his joy.

Whatever may come, the Lord will lift up David's head to rejoice in the end. So when night comes, even though he's on the run, David lies down and sleeps. He wakes in the morning, for the Lord sustains him.

And the Lord, sustains you, dear Christian. Jesus laid down his life for you and rose up from the grave. No matter what foes, troubles, or worries surround you, Jesus is greater. They may bare their teeth and growl at you like a pack of wolves surrounding a sheep. But Jesus strikes them on the jaw. He shatters their teeth. They have lost their bite. For Jesus is your Shepherd.

Salvation belongs to the Lord. Deliverance comes from him. So on those sleepless nights or when the stresses of this season hound you, call out with David, "Arise, O Lord! Deliver me, O my God" (Psalm 3:7 NIV1984). For he is your shield, your glory, your joy. His blessing is on you, his blood-bought people. Read Psalm 3.

## Christmas Schedule

- Sat., Dec. 24, Christmas Eve, 6:30 p.m.
- Sun., Dec. 25, Christmas Day, 10:00 a.m.
- Sun., Jan. 1, New Year's Day, 10:30 a.m.
- No Sunday school or Bible class on Christmas Day or New Year's Day.

## Christmas Eve Children's Service

The Sunday school children have been working hard to learn their lines for the Christmas Eve program. The theme is *Christ in the Christmas Tree*. Hear how the Christmas tree reminds us of Jesus and why he was born. So come this Christmas Eve and worship the Savior, who exchanged heaven's throne for a manger to open wide the door of paradise for you. Service time is 6:30 p.m. Sunday school children are asked to be at church by 6:00 p.m.



## Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting is scheduled for January 8 after the annual potluck. Some of the items on the agenda are the following:

Election for chairman.

The Child Protection Policy. Insurance companies have recommended that churches have a policy in place to show that they are actively trying to prevent problems. Draft copies of the policy are available in the narthex. The voters will be asked whether to adopt the policy or not. If you have any questions, please talk to Pastor Bitter.

Lenten, Holy Week, and Easter Service times. Lent begins on February 22 and Easter is April 8. The council recommends keeping the same schedule as last year: Lenten, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday services at 7:00 p.m. Easter breakfast beginning at 7:30 a.m. Easter service at 9:00 a.m.

Distribute the interest from the

scholarship fund on behalf of our members (Abigail and Caleb Bitter) attending Great Plains Lutheran High School.

Set the Congregational Mission Offering (CMO) for 2012. The CMO for 2011 was \$8000.

Set our offering for the Lutheran Institutional Ministry Association (LIMA). LIMA runs the WELS chaplain program for the hospitals in Minneapolis and St. Paul and also helps with the campus ministries in Minneapolis and Mankato. The council recommends an offering of \$500, as we've done for many years.

Organist and pastor salaries.

Mileage reimbursement. The council recommends leaving it at \$0.50/mile.

Guest preacher stipend. The council recommends leaving it the same at \$80 plus mileage with a maximum of \$200 total (\$80 stipend + \$120 mileage).

If you have thoughts or questions on any of these items, please speak to a voter, council man, or pastor.

## Annual Potluck

Plan to stay a little later after church on



January 8 and join your fellow members for some food and friendship.

## Sunday School Project

On October 16 the Sunday school took time for an activity day. Rather than having a regular lesson, they made bookmarks for the WELS prison ministry. The children designed their bookmarks with a religious message or picture.

When a person in prison realizes their guilt, feelings of despair and hopelessness can run deep. Who would ever care about them again? The bookmarks says that this child cared enough to make this for them. Might not God's love that moved the child to do this also reach out to them in prison? Our acts of love done in Jesus' name point others to God's great love in Christ.

If you would like to learn more about WELS prison ministry or to volunteer as a pen pal or in another way, go to [www.wels.net/special-ministries/prison-ministry](http://www.wels.net/special-ministries/prison-ministry)

You may also contact them at 507-354-3130 or WELS Prison Ministry, Attn: David Nack, P.O. Box 452, New Ulm, MN 56073-1840.

## Worship Plans

Here are some thoughts on the upcoming Divine Services, as we gather as the body of Christ to hear his Word and proclaim his grace and glory.

**Sunday, December 25** – So important is our Savior that we mark not only the evening before his birth but also the day itself. In a special service of readings, devotions, and songs, we devote our time and effort to publicly celebrate the birth of our King. Please note the service time is 10:00 a.m.

**Sunday, January 1** – This is not only New Year's Day; it's also the eighth day of Christmas. Do you remember what happened on the eighth day after Jesus' birth? He was circumcised and given the name Jesus. How does this change the way we look at the year past? How does this prepare us for the year to come?

**Sunday, January 8** – The Christmas season comes to an end on January 6 with the celebration of the Epiphany of our Lord. So we'll take this Sunday to remember how the wise men, or magi, came to a house in Bethlehem to worship Jesus. The word Epiphany means "to make known." The visit of the wise men makes it known that Jesus came not only as the Savior for Jewish people but for all people, even for you and me.

**Sunday, January 15** – The First Sunday after Epiphany celebrates the Baptism of our Lord. Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan reveals that Jesus is the Son of God. The Father himself says so. And it marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, showing that he came to be the Savior for sinners. During the Epiphany season we remember how Jesus made himself known as our God and the Savior for all people.

## St. John's Trivia Question

As December closes Pastor Bitter will have served St. John's as the second longest resident pastor. Which pastor served the longest and when did he serve? Answers will be in the next newsletter.

Dear friends in Christ,

Here is the list for greeters, ushers and cleaners for the next three months (January - March). If you are unable to serve as scheduled, please switch with someone else. If you would like to be removed from the list, please contact Pastor Bitter.

As we serve one another in these ways, we are serving our Lord, who has ransomed us to be his own. So I give thanks to God for enabling us to work together as members of one body in Christ, each one of us using the gifts he gives to gladly build up the body and serve one another in love.

## **Ushers:**

(List of duties are posted in the narthex. The captain is responsible to make sure that two members of his team will be present to usher.)

### **January**

Doug Nelson (capt.)  
John Jepma  
Dave Joos  
Seth Nelson  
Delroy Thielke

### **February**

Dick Lubenow (capt.)  
Jason Brown  
Barry Nelson  
Dennis Schroeder  
Cory Schroeder

### **March**

Duane Hausmann (capt.)  
Tom Mohr  
Harvey Flaten  
Scott Boettcher  
Ryan Flaten

## **Greeters:**

(Please be at church 15 minutes before service to hand out bulletins and greet. If you cannot make your Sunday, please exchange with someone.)

### **January**

1 -- Scott & Shannon Boettcher  
8 -- Rachel Gray and Ryan Gray  
15 -- Jason & Amy Brown  
22 -- Shae Brown and Collin Brown  
29 -- Harvey & Mary Flaten

### **February**

5 -- Justin Flaten  
12 -- Jolene Greiner & Courtney  
19 -- Duane & Bonnie Hausmann  
26 -- John & Michelle Hickman

### **March**

4 -- Gerald & Karen Hoffman  
11 -- John & Tawnia Jepma  
18 -- Dave & Phyllis Joos  
25 -- Bridget Joos

## **Church cleaning:**

(List of duties are posted in the narthex.)

### **January**

Don & Janet Spencer  
Bridget Joos

### **February**

Pastor & Mary Bitter  
Dick & Polly Smith

### **March**

Barry & Sandy Nelson  
Chuck & Lisa Nelson

*“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,  
and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28 NIV1984).*

**St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church -- Hancock, MN  
January 2011**

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you” (Isaiah 60:1 NIV1984).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> <b>New Year's Day</b> (white)  10:30am Divine Service and Lord's Supper	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>  4:00pm Catechism Class	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> <b>Epiphany</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> <b>Epiphany</b> (observed) (white)  9:15am Sunday School 9:30am Youth Group 9:30am Bible Class 10:30am Divine Service <b>11:30am Annual Potluck</b> <b>12:15am Annual Meeting</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>  2:00pm Ladies' Society  4:00pm Catechism Class	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> <b>Baptism of our Lord</b> (observed) (white)  9:15am Sunday School 9:30am Youth Bible Class 9:30am Bible Class 10:30am Divine Service and Lord's Supper	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>  4:00pm Catechism Class	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany</b>  9:15am Sunday School 9:30am Youth Bible Class 9:30am Bible Class 10:30am Divine Service	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>  4:00pm Catechism Class	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> <b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany</b>  9:15am Sunday School 9:30am Youth Bible Class 9:30am Bible Class 10:30am Divine Service	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				

