



ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

"All God's Children Joyfully Celebrating God's Transforming Grace"

Established 1852

915 Federal Av. Saginaw, MI 48607

989.754.0489

Grace and peace to you all,

As we enter this new month, we are mindful that once again we begin a Lenten journey that should bring us closer to God. Lent Originated in the fourth century. The season of Lent spans 40 weekdays beginning on Ash Wednesday and climaxing during Holy Week with Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday), Good Friday, and concluding Saturday before Easter.

God who has been the head of this congregation for 160 years will not desert you...

Originally, Lent was the time of preparation for those who were to be baptized. Today, Lent is marked by a time of prayer and preparation to celebrate Easter. The disciplines of Lent include fasting, prayer and alms giving. Since Sundays celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, the six Sundays that occur during Lent are not counted as part of the 40 days of Lent, and are referred to as the Sundays in Lent. Christians today use this period of time for introspection, self examination, and repentance. This year, Ash Wednesday occurs on February 22. As we begin to prepare for the coming season, we can begin to take stock of our lives and consider what we will add or deny ourselves to draw closer to the one who gave his life for us.

In January I went to a pastor's Leadership Event in which the theme was taken from Isaiah 43:19, "I am about to do a new thing". I know I've used that before in a newsletter article. I could feel that

something new was about to happen to us here at St. John. Who could have guessed that the "New Thing" would unfold the way it has? I know that God is calling me to a "New Thing". It is with some trepidation, but also excitement that I wanted to let you know that it is time for me to pursue another call. At the end of May, I will no longer be your pastor. I have prayed about this, and know that it is right.

I have always been so proud to be here, to feel the love and respect of the people within our family. I have always appreciated how you have cared about our youth, and the children of the city. I will always love you all, you are my first congregation. We've gone through almost 13 years of growth and walking together on paths we could not always see where we were being led. I am grateful that we are being given enough time to say goodbye well. We'll have many opportunities to speak about our life together. I do not now know where I'm going, but in faith I know that it is time to open myself to the direction of the Holy Spirit. I know that the God who has been the head of this congregation for 160 years will not desert you, but will continue to direct your life here too.

God bless you and may you know God's peace,

*Pastor
Paulette*



CHOIR NOTES

We want YOU to join one of St. John's awesome choirs! This is a great time to join, and we always have room for more people who want to make a joyful noise with us. If you are interested in joining the Bell Choir, but have never rung a handbell before, please let Beth know you'd like to learn! She'd love to organize a class to go through the basics.

CHANCEL CHOIR rehearses Sundays from Noon – 1 p.m.

BELL CHOIR rehearses Tuesdays from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Contact Beth Hale for information on all music opportunities at St. John or for a choir performance schedule.

DID YOU KNOW? (Hymn Version)

By Beth Hale, Minister of Music

When you sing the wonderful hymns that are part of our Lutheran hymnody you may have noticed some common words or ideas. Some of the ideas repeat often simply because they are core components of our faith, things like grace, salvation, sacrifice, love and peace. But there is one particular thematic idea I'd like to draw your attention to that I hope will open your eyes to hymns in a new way:

ESCHATOLOGICAL STANZA

I know, I know; "eschatological stanza" is a mouthful! So let me break it down for you. "Eschatology" refers to the theological study of the end times, both the end times in our own lives and the end of all time, when Christ comes again in glory. It particularly refers to what we think of as heaven. "Stanza" is another name for a verse of poetry or lyrics. So an eschatological stanza can be defined as a verse in a hymn (usually the final verse) that refers to the end times and our final destination in heaven.

Many, many hymns contain eschatological stanzas. Some hymns are entirely about the subject of heaven ("Shall We Gather at the River," "Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling," "Abide With Me"), but you will often find

eschatological stanzas at the end of a hymn with an unrelated subject. Here are some examples:

"How Great Thou Art," verse 4: When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation, and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!

"My Hope is Built on Nothing Less," verse 4: When he shall come with trumpet sound, oh, may I then in him be found...

"Rock of Ages," verse 4: While I draw this fleeting breath, when mine eyelids close in death, when I soar to worlds unknown, see thee on thy judgment throne...

"What Wondrous Love is This," verse 4: And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on...and when from death I'm free, I'll sing God's love for me, and through eternity I'll sing on...

The next time you're in church, I encourage you to look for eschatological stanzas in the hymns we sing on a given Sunday. You will find them more often than you expect! And remember that they're there for a reason: to remind us of the gifts of salvation and eternal life given freely to us in Jesus Christ.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

Ash Wednesday is on February 22nd this year. Please join us for worship at 11:00 a.m. or 7:00 p.m.

THOUGHTS FROM MARK

I was preparing for the Installation Service for Carl Bjork (Trinity Project) on this Sunday. He had chosen a hymn that I did not know. It is titled "Every Time I hear the Spirit". I found it to be an extremely catchy tune. I watched numerous versions on YouTube, my feet were tapping and I was drumming the part on the computer desk. It is a spiritually moving song.

At the bottom of the video anyone is allowed to leave comments. I was surprised at how many comments were along the vein of "if my church was like that I would go". I wanted to reply to all saying your church can be like that! You need to go and volunteer. Somebody else has the same idea you have. You will never meet that person by staying at home.

With one simple request St. John raised enough money to buy nearly \$2000 worth of groceries for people in need. Like us, they are children of God. An Isolated Christian is a Paralyzed Christian. One person did not give that money, the group of us did. When we want to make things different for the Glory of God we need to work together. If you need to put it on your calendar, our "meetings" are on Sundays at 9:30a.m. We even provide snacks!

If the family at St. John hasn't seen you in a while, stop in. If you can't stop in call, write, or email. For those who make the "meetings" raise your hand in the air and say here I am Lord, what would you like me to do today?

God's peace,
Mark Oswald

BIBLE STUDY AFTER SUNDAY SERVICE

Grab a coffee and join us to read and learn about the Psalms.

MEN'S BIBLE AND BREAKFAST

at Fuzzy's 8:00 A.M.
February 11, 2012
Share the good news with us!

HOSPITALIZED

David Meyer
Norene Preston

DEATHS

Albert Fetting

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

On Tuesday, March 6th at 7:00 p.m. we will host our annual **Service of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS**. The disease affects millions around the world, many right here in Saginaw. Join us for this ecumenical worship service as we pray for healing and a cure for AIDS.



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Bishop's Letter, February 2012

2015

"I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.
Great are the works of the LORD,
studied by all who delight in them." ~ Psalm 111

Imagine February 2015. You've just arrived for worship with members, friends, and strangers. As you still yourself, you look at those sisters and brothers seated around you. You think back to February 2012. Many of them were around three years ago, but a number are new to this assembly. You think about the shift in spirit in your congregation over these past three years. A significantly higher number of the congregation are visibly and consistently more joyful, more hopeful, more generous. You have witnessed a greater yearning to give one's self away to others, locally and even globally, as members and friends have come to live steadfastly in the knowledge of the depth of God's love in Christ for them. As easy and natural as breathing, you whisper to yourself, "I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart..." for the wonderful works God has done in our midst in these last three years.

We will be much closer to the reality of our full mission potential by imagining it than had we not unleashed the yearning and wonderings, the dreams of what could be in 2015.

Think February 2012. This is a big month for our synod, and an important one, I pray, for your congregation. We are asking every congregation in the two ELCA synods in the lower peninsula to find ways to gather (by Ash Wednesday) for conversation about God's mission for the congregation and to articulate its particular giftedness. The great joy in this conversation will come when people speak of what it would be like in three years if the congregation reached its full mission potential.

Similarly, you will help "paint a picture" of your synod imagining in three years, in 2015, what it would be like if we used our full mission potential. What would the relationship between and among congregations be like?



What would be the relationship between the two synods be like? How might they partner more effectively? What would an ideal relationship with your bishop look like?

All of this will be reported prior to February 27 on a Response Form sent to your congregation. The folks in the ELCA Research and Evaluation office will then gather and organize all of our thoughts and ideas, presenting to us by the Synod Assembly the rich themes from our conversations. The picture emerging will point us to what God is calling us in the lower peninsula of Michigan to be and do, especially as we imagine our life in 2015.

I am excited about what we'll soon discover about our future as we give free rein to our imaginations. Pastor Karl Reko, our facilitator for this discernment process, has planted in our midst this seed of wisdom: In three years we will not witness exactly what we imagined our full mission potential to be. But we will be much closer to that reality by imagining it than had we not unleashed the yearnings and wonderings, the dreams of what could be in 2015.

God bless your conversations.

~ Bishop John



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2012 Joint Synod Assembly North/West Lower Michigan and Southeast Michigan Synods

WORD OF GOD, WORD OF LIFE

Thursday, May 17 – Saturday, May 19

Lansing Center: 333 E. Michigan Ave, Lansing, MI 48933

Guest Presenters

- Rev. Jim Mauney, Bishop of the Virginia Synod, ELCA
- Linda Norman, Treasurer of the ELCA

Location

Meals, plenary sessions and workshops will take place at the Lansing Center.

Registration

Registration fees are \$120 per person with meals (for clergy/lay voting members and visitors) and \$70 without meals (for clergy/lay voting members and visitors). There is no charge for retired clergy without meals, \$60 with meals. There is no charge for assigned interns.

Registrations are due on or before April 16, 2012. Because of the added administrative work involved, a late fee of \$50 will be charged for registrations received at the Synod office after this date.

Please note: Each congregation that has less than 750 baptized members are asked to bring an additional voting member between the ages of 14- 18, and those with more than 750 are asked to bring 2 additional voting members between the ages of 14-18.

Deadlines:

Nominations are due on or before March 15, 2012.

Resolutions are due on or before March 15, 2012. Resolutions must come from a voting member, a congregation, a committee or an agency of the Synod.

Annual Synod committee and agency reports are due on or before March 31, 2012.

More complete Assembly information re: registration instructions, lodging, resolutions, nominations, annual reports and display tables are forthcoming.



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2012 JOINT SYNOD ASSEMBLY OFFERINGS:

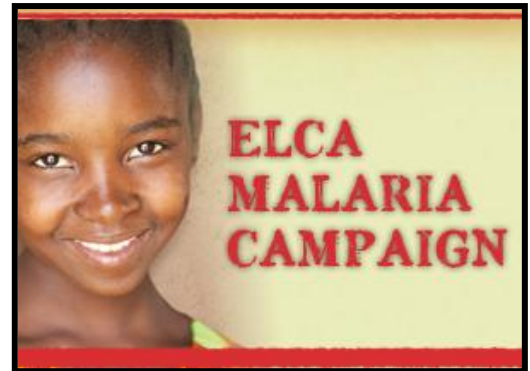
ABUNDANT GRACE FOR CHILDREN IN AFRICA AND MICHIGAN...

The Synod Council invites every congregation in our synod to receive offerings during the next 3 ½ months for the ELCA Malaria Campaign and for Advent Lutheran (Lake Ann) and to bring those offerings to the Synod Assembly, May 17-19, 2012.

We in the ELCA are called to participate in a global effort to eliminate the scourge of malaria by the end of 2015. Our particular niche in this effort will be through prevention and treatment ministries of Lutheran churches in Africa. In Africa a child dies about every 40 seconds because of malaria. But malaria is both preventable and treatable. [A challenge for us would be to rival the success of one of our sister synods in Region 6: Northeastern Ohio Synod congregations have given over \$150,000 to the Malaria Campaign.]

Advent Lutheran, one of our newest mission congregations located between Traverse City and Frankfort, has found its niche in God's mission especially with children and youth. With our help this congregation will be able to break ground this fall for their first unit. This is our moment to come alongside Advent in order that the congregation might continue a pattern of remarkable growth.

For both offerings, bring checks made out to the Synod, but with memo lines indicating ELCA Malaria Campaign or Advent. [We have a long tradition of Synod Assembly offerings for ELCA World Hunger. If you have already been gathering gifts for that purpose for this Assembly, we will certainly acknowledge those gifts as well. Since hunger and malaria are often tragic companions, our Synod Hunger Team will be lifting up the Malaria Campaign at their Assembly display.]



NEWS FROM THE SYNOD HUNGER TEAM

One in seven people in the world is chronically hungry. 1 in 7. Look around you when you are at church, work, school, or the grocery store. Count seven people. Imagine that one of those people is hungry. Worldwide there are a huge number of people who are hungry--1,000,000,000 men, women and children.

One in seven people in the world is chronically hungry. I know about chronically, because I've had tennis elbow for years. The docs tell me it's a chronic problem. It is always there, always. But the pain in my elbows is nothing compared to what it must be like to be continuously hungry. To always be hungry.

I have hope, believe it or not, that somehow, sometime, the inflammation in my elbows will go away and I will be pain-free when I hold my hymnal, shake hands, or grip a tool. I wonder. Does the one person in seven have hope that their hunger will go away? Do they have any hope at all? I don't know.

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What I do know is that we, you and I, hold in our hearts and hands a tremendous amount of hope. This hope is in disguise. At first glance, it looks like money-- bills and coins. But when we share what we have, a transformation occurs that changes the dollars into hope, hope that becomes a tangible, life-sustaining way out of chronic hunger.

One in seven people in the world is chronically hungry. We share hope through ELCA World Hunger, and when we do, hunger is gone. For how many will we end chronic hunger? Go in peace, serve the Lord.

~ Judy Enger, Synod Hunger Team Member

MATTHEW 25 AWARD

Remember that nominations for the Matthew 25 Award for congregations that reach out locally to help alleviate hunger are due by April 15. Detailed information is in the January 2012 edition of the Bishop's Letter on pg. 8: http://www.mittensynod.org/news/pdfs/2012_01_Docs/Jan_2012_Bishop_Letter.pdf

IT'S ABOUT HOW WE RELATE TO EACH OTHER

Pastor Roger Hardy, Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission

Most congregations desire to have Sunday AM visitors and hope that these new people will come to the point of joining our communities of faith. From what I read and from the comments of some new members in various places, here is what seems to be important: **Smile, look at people, and speak to them.**

Sound familiar? Yes, this all makes a difference. (1) A smile seems to reflect to people that this is a community that you enjoy being a part of. Smiling sends a friendly signal that you see them as a child of God. (2) Looking at people versus looking past people. All of us have a need to be noticed, to be seen, to be acknowledged, especially in a new and strange place. (3) Speaking to people a simple word of "hello," or "hi," or introducing ourselves to them. Speaking also means that we are ready to listen to their responses. We need to be ready to take some time with them, rather than moving on to the coffee line, to a committee meeting or to visit with someone we already know.

How we relate to each other does make a difference...

IF YOU WANT TO INSPIRE STEWARDS ... YOU HAVE TO INVEST! INVEST WISELY...

Dear Pastor and Stewardship Leaders,

Lent starts in February in 2012! Thinking about how to prepare?

It is most fitting that we speak of stewardship during this period of contemplation, penitence and alms-giving. It is a time of giving and doing charitable work! Our booklet, **Lenten Devotions for God's Stewards** will inspire a strengthened sense of faith and stewardship. Give the gift that gives back!

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We have put together the perfect package for your faith community: a Lenten devotions booklet, matching offertory envelope, an editable letter from the pastor, as well as a bulletin insert. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.parishpublishing.org/lent.htm>

EARTHKEEPING NEWS AND UPDATES

Kim Winchell, Diaconal Minister for Earthkeeping Ministries

kwinchellm@aol.com

Though spring is (technically) yet a good ways off, a number of creation care related resources and opportunities are currently "blossoming." As always, please let me know how I can be of assistance to you, in the equipping and empowering of your congregants.

+ An "Ecumenical Lenten Carbon Fast Calendar" provides a daily email reflection with a suggestion for reducing energy use in your congregation or at home. This was first offered in 2011 and was well received. Sign up at

<http://www.macucc.org/pages/detail/2410>

Additional potentially helpful websites about reducing energy use:

<http://flourishonline.org/2010/09/first-steps-in-creation-care-for-church-facilities/>

<http://www.vampirepowersucks.com>

<http://coolcongregations.com>

Another set of Lenten reflections (from a Catholic Women Religious community)...

+ "Renewing the Face of the Earth: Lenten Reflections on Air" incorporates scientific and theological knowledge about creation, God's presence therein, and our call to care for it. A five-session resource, "Renewing the Face of the Earth" can enhance group prayer and sharing, build community, deepen awareness of God's presence and action within creation, increase participants' understanding of air pollution and global warming, and motivate participants to action. This free resource is available now for perusal or downloading:

http://www.shcj.org/amer/documents/2012LentReflectionBookAir_001.pdf

+ Interested in wind energy?

The American Wind Energy Association's (AWEA) Midwest Wind Energy Summit will be held in Chicago on March 6 - 7. Providing a comprehensive view of the wind energy markets in the Midwest, the conference will be AWEA's first regional event focusing on critical wind power issues.

<http://www.awea.org/events/AWEA-Midwest-Wind-Energy-Markets-Seminar-2012.cfm>

Earthkeeping News cont. on next page...



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+ Interested in bridging the perceived divide between faith and science?

February 10-12 will be the sixth annual celebration of “**Evolution Weekend**,” using the anniversary of the birthday of Charles Darwin as an opportunity to demonstrate that religious people from many faiths and locations understand that evolution is sound science and poses no problems for their faith. This is affiliated with the “Clergy Letters Project” which works with clergy from many traditions, and scientists, to counter anti-science fundamentalism. See: <http://theclergyletterproject.org/>

+ **A lovely set of 7 video reflections on Healing Earth**, written by Al Fritsch; online in YouTube type videos (generally less than 10 minutes long, each). Check them out! <http://www.seescapes.com/HE02.php>

Peace to you, Peace to the Earth!

MICHI-LU-CA /LIVING WATER MINISTRIES ANNOUNCEMENT

Julie and Adam Delezenne have accepted the position of Director of Michi-Lu-Ca and Communications for Living Water Ministries. They will fill the position jointly, each serving different aspects of the job description with their specific gifts and skills. They come to Michi-Lu-Ca after serving as Co-Directors of Ebert Ranch, an ELCA outdoor ministry facility in Harper, TX.

Julie obtained her Master of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary and is working toward a Master of Non-Profit Administration. While at McCormick, Adam worked as Director of New Media Communications for the seminary while also beginning course work toward a Master of Arts in Theological Studies.

Julie and Adam served multiple summers while in college at Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake in Michigan. They feel especially called to outdoor ministry and are very excited to get settled in at Michi-Lu-Ca with their 21 month old son, Isaac.

Please keep Adam, Julie, and Isaac in your prayers as they make the long move from Texas to Michigan. They will be making that transition mid-February and begin active employment toward the end of that month.

In the meantime, please continue to direct Michi-Lu-Ca related inquiries to the Living Water Ministries office at (231) 861-4138.





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GRACE LUTHERAN 2011 "SACRED MUSIC CAMP"

In the summer of 2011 the members of Grace Lutheran (Lansing) launched a new concept – a musical outreach program that we call "Grace Sacred Music Camp" (GSMC). GSMC developed from discussion of Grace's organist and choir director Paul Dombroske's initial idea of a "keyboard lab" - essentially a class for youth who are interested in learning or "testing" the keyboard as an instrument. It would ultimately involve a total of 9 identical Yamaha keyboards which Grace purchased this last year. The equipment includes keyboards, headphones, stands, benches, and an inter-connective control unit, and it is quite cool!

GSMC developed to be a week-long (held in the early evening hours) sacred music "immersion experience" for 8 to 13-year olds, with three tracks: 1) introduction to keyboard, 2) choral singing, and 3) songs and stories, a bible-school like exploration of the stories and texts that grounded the four choral pieces chosen for the week. The attending students rotated through each of the three tracks, and the first annual Grace Sacred Music Camp was held the week of Aug 8-12, 2011.

At the conclusion of the week families and friends were invited to an "Informance," not a "performance," but a view of what the week's instruction process – and results – were all about. The staff, families and friends—and maybe the kids—were somewhat stunned at how much the "campers" were able to learn during the week and to share during the Informance. When the doors finally closed on Friday we were left with a very rewarding and satisfying "Wow!" and eagerness to prepare for Grace 2012 Sacred Music Camp.

The initial proposal – that of a keyboard lab for up to eight students –also continues, and Grace now offers very affordable after-school classes for up to 8 students in both keyboard and choral music. The labs are once-per-week (Thursdays) from 4:30-5:30 pm at the church and feature instruction in both keyboard and choral sacred music. Anyone in the greater Lansing area who would like to know more about the Sacred Music labs and Summer Camp programs can call Grace's office at 517.372.5830.

News from Pastor Julie Bailey, Assistant to the Bishop for Vocation and Education

WOMEN IN MINISTRY EVENT

For all women from the North/West Lower Michigan and Southeast Michigan Synods

Event: Dinner Theatre in Turkeyville, MI—*Church Basement Ladies*.

Date: Friday, March 9, 2012

Cost: If we have 12 registrations, cost is \$38.50, plus tax and tip. (\$40 if we don't have 12).

Time: Dinner at 6:00 p.m., show starts at 8:00 p.m.

Location: Turkeyville USA Dinner Theatre, 18935 15 1/2 Mile Rd., Marshall, MI

<http://www.turkeyville.com/the-community.html>

Please register with Pastor Laura Gerstl, Calvary Lutheran Church, Lansing, MI 48917 by February 21 (final count is due to the theater so this is firm). Want to stay over in Marshall for more fellowship? Both the Hampton Inn and the Holiday Inn Express are in Marshall. The cost of a room is around \$110/night; get a roomie and it's less!



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YOUTH NEWS

The 2011 Gathering, REVOLUTION, was a huge success! New to the event was a day of service. The attendees served approximately 1800 hours, or for a monetary value of \$38,448. That is a fabulous start to a revolution! To view videos made by participants before and after their service, check out the videos on the synod website:

http://www.mittensynod.org/leadership/youth_ministry.html

UPCOMING EVENTS...IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO START THINKING ABOUT...

Leadership Training School: <http://www.elcalivingwater.com/Pages/spprogramdescriptions.html#seniorhigh>

Advanced Leadership Training School: <http://www.elcalivingwater.com/Pages/spprogramdescriptions.html#seniorhigh>

Bass Lake: August 3-6, 2012 / Theme: GO!

Also, movement toward a **Mitten Synod Lutheran Youth Organization (Mitten Synod LYO)** has begun. If on Facebook, like "Mitten Synod Lutheran Youth Organization" at <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Mitten-Synod-Lutheran-Youth-Organization/312880795411439>. You can see the promo video when you like this page.

There is planning in the works for a **lock in/service project May 18-19 in Lansing**. This would coincide with the Synod Assembly, where I am praying we have youth participating in the decisions of our church. Each congregation that has less than 750 baptized members are asked to bring an additional voting member between the ages of 14- 18, and those with more than 750 are asked to bring 2 additional voting members between the ages of 14-18. Let your voice and vote be heard!

DISCERNMENT RETREAT—MARCH 2-3, 2012

Are you or is someone in your congregation considering public rostered ministry? If you have ever thought about it, this retreat is for you. Come to discern with others who are thinking similarly, learn the process, and ask questions. Cost is \$100 for a double room, \$160 for a single. Spouses are encouraged to attend. We will begin Friday at 5:00P and end Saturday at 5:30P. This is jointly sponsored by Region 6 which includes Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky. This retreat will be held at Camp Mowana in Mansfield, OH. If you are thinking this may be in your future, I hope to see you there. The registration flyer will be available on the synod website under Leadership/Candidacy...

<http://www.mittensynod.org/leadership/candidacy.html>



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SUMMER SEMINARY SAMPLER—TRINITY LUTHERAN SEMINARY

Trinity Lutheran Seminary (Columbus, Ohio) is again offering the Seminary Sampler program. This is a three week program which challenges young people to think theologically, seek justice locally and globally, and experience an intentional Christian community. If you are a sophomore, junior or senior in high school and have leadership skills, check this out.

For more information email Laura Book (lbook@tlsohio.edu) and check out <http://www.summersampler.com/>. The dates are June 10 - July 30, 2012 or July 8 - 28, 2012.

THANK YOU NOTE FOR 2010-2011 SCHOLARSHIP

Dear Contributors to this Fund,

Thank you for funding the scholarship that I received for the 2010-2011 school year. This year I am serving as an intern at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Cuero, Texas. An important part of my formation has been to participate in individual counseling. Because I have established a trusting and helpful relationship with a counselor in Columbus, Ohio, where I am attending seminary, I decided to continue our counseling sessions over the phone while I am in Texas. I received scholarship money to cover the cost of the co-pay for those sessions.

In all honesty, I was hesitant to be so frank about how I spent this money, as if you might think that I am less qualified because I rely on counseling. On the other hand, I can't imagine going through candidacy without this kind of help. I realize that those whom I admire most in this vocation are those who can be fully present when listening to those around them, especially when those around them are in pain. In order to be that kind of pastor, I believe I need to know how to be fully present to my own pain and to understand my own anxiety. Counseling has been essential in helping me do this.

Thank you for supporting my formation and for helping me to respond as faithfully as I can to this call to ordained ministry.

Yours in Christ,
Kristen Ulmanis



Kristen is a Trinity Lutheran Seminary student and a member of Trinity, Midland.



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SAVE THE DATES

As 2012 approaches, many things are in the works. If you are like me, you are already making plans. Do the congregation and pastor have the goals and focuses determined for the coming year? Have each of you made your resolutions? Have you updated your 2012 calendar with the happenings? Please make note of the following activities and add to your calendar if appropriate. Hope to see you there! ~ Pastor Julie Bailey

January 22-24, 2012: Winter Leadership Retreat in Midland

February 15, 2012: Parochial and Bishop Reports due

March 2-3, 2012: Discernment Retreat, Camp Mowana, Mansfield, Ohio

March 9: Women in Ministry Dinner Theatre Event, Turkeyville, MI

April 22-23, 2012: First Call Retreat, Potawatamee, IN

April 27-28, 2012: Candidacy Retreat, Dewitt (Committee members meet April 26)

May 17-19, 2012: Joint Synod Assembly, Lansing, MI

July 28, 2012: How to Grow Faith (for teachers, pastors, parents, etc.), Grand Rapids, MI

July 29-August 3, 2012: Leadership and Advanced Leadership Training School, Michi-lu-ca

August 3-6, 2012: Bass Lake Festival, Michi-lu-ca

December 27-30, 2012: The Gathering, TBD

SYNOD BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITY

At the 2011 Synod Assembly, a resolution was adopted that as members of the synod, we would be encouraged to become more fluent in the language of Scripture, encouraging a daily reading of Scripture. Beginning February 1, the synod blog for Bible Study will become a daily opportunity. We will read and discuss the gospel of Mark. Find and join the blog at <http://nwlmibible.blogspot.com>. Join in day or night.

I also recently became aware from a colleague of Reading the Bible in 90 Days. If interested, the link can be found at <http://www.thebrooknetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/BibleIn90Days.pdf>.

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST: A SILENCE, DIRECTED ECUMENICAL EASTER RETREAT FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Location: St. Francis Retreat Center, DeWitt, MI

Date: Sunday, April 15, 6:00pm (dinner) - Wednesday, April 18, Noon

Cost: \$290 single occupancy and meals

Retreat Leaders: Nancy Brousseau, OP and Rev. Erick Johnson, ELCA

Registration form may be found on the Center for Mission and Ministry webpage:

http://www.mittensynod.org/ctr_mission_ministry/looking_ahead.html

To register, please email Nancy at nancybrousseau@mittensynod.org (Limited to 15 participants)

**CONGREGATIONS
IN TRANSITION
FEBRUARY 2012**

Immanuel, Allegan
Pastor Dean Beckwith, Interim

St. Paul, Alpena
Pastor Tom Orth (UCC), Interim Minister
Interviews underway

Evangelical, East Jordan
Pastor Ken Lein, Supply pastor

Edgewood, Fruitport
Pastor Paul Kehnle, Contracted Stated Supply

Our Savior's, Edmore
Pastor Mike Kemper,
Intentional Interim Minister

St. James, Jackson
Pastor Bruce Lerum has accepted a call to serve with Victory Lutheran Church in Mesa, AZ. His final day with St. James is February 19th. Godspeed.

Trinity, Manton
Pastor Steve Abend, Contracted stated supply

Immanuel, Suttons Bay
Call committee formed, Interviews underway

Christ, Wyoming
Supply Pastors, Interviews underway

MEMORIALS...

Given by Eugene Miller:
In memory of Herbert Volz, Sr. (camp fund)
In memory of Lena Volz (altar flower fund)
In memory of Marge McInerney (music fund)
For music fund, For church maintenance

Given by David Menapace and Family:
In memory of Kathryn Menapace (altar guild)
In memory of Jenny Diendorfer (choir fund)
In memory of Steven Weiland (camp fund)
In memory of Brian Smith (camp fund)

In memory of Kathryn Menapace, given by Arthur Menapace (general fund)

In memory of Jennie Deindorfer, given by Arthur Menapace (general fund)

In memory of Rachael Johnson, given by Dorothy Witte and James Witte (general fund)

In memory of Richard Lee Johnson, given by Elizabeth June Johnson (Breakfast/Hungry)

In memory of Leroy Bender given by:
Bruce Bender, Julie Bender, Frances Mann,
Peter & Susan Peer, Bernard & Lorraine
Whitman, William & Janet Ruge

GIFTS...

A donation was given by Roger & Pauline Winterstein (Summer Day Camp).

A donation was given by Bill & Bonnie Braun (General Fund).

A donation was given by Allen & Gloria Thorsby (Breakfast for the Hungry).

THANK YOU 105!

Thank you from Dorothy Witte for all the wonderful cards and well wishes for her 105th birthday! She is grateful to the members of St. John for remembering her special day!

STEPHEN MINISTRY NEWS

The Stephen Leaders are pleased to announce that training will begin on February 21st for the first group of Stephen Ministers.



We are asking for your prayers as this dedicated group of people begins their training. This diverse group will spend 50 hours of class time learning through reading, lecture, role play and videos. They will begin to grow in many unexpected ways.

Are you a non-talking, quiet type of person? You could be a Stephen Minister. We are looking for people who like to LISTEN, people who don't have all of the answers, and people

who can walk with another person in spirit. The Stephen Minister Leader Team has extended the application period. Stephen Minister training will begin on February 21st. You may still have time as of this writing! Please contact the church office or Sara Ostrander at 781-2481.

Memorials/Gifts Received	
December 21, 2011 - January 20, 2012	
General Fund	\$2,100.00
Altar Flowers	\$225.00
Building & Maintenance	\$240.00
Music & Organ	\$665.00
Breakfast for the Hungry	\$100.00
Luther League	\$0.00
Summer Day Camp	\$25.00
Camp Lu Wix E (Needs List)	\$0.00
Camp Lu Wix E (Main Fund)	\$115.00
Camp Lu Wix E (Repair Fund)	\$0.00
Camp Lu Wix E (Roof Fund)	\$0.00
Heating Fund	\$0.00
Kitchen Fund	\$0.00
Evangelism Fund	\$0.00
Parking Lot Fund	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$3,470.00

**God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes...
- Rev. 7:17**



