

## **A Word from the Pastor for Advent, Christmas, and the New Year...**

We are about to finish one year and begin another. The Church Year begins on December 1 with Advent, and of course, our calendar year comes to a close on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

But what happens between those two dates is amazing. Advent is the season of expectation, of anticipation, as we wait for the birth of the Christ child, the word that our light has come. We change over to Year A with Matthew's gospel, where in Advent, we are reminded to watch for the second coming of Christ. Matthew then moves on to John the Baptist with his announcements and his doubts about "the one who is to come."

An illustration for Advent.

*"Marguerite Higgins was a correspondent during the Korean conflict. One bitter winter's day, she began interviewing a muddy Marine who had just returned from a grueling battle. As he opened a tin can of C-rations and began eating, Higgins said to the young man, "If I could give you anything in the world you wanted, what would you ask for?"*

*The Marine thought for a moment and then said, "Give me tomorrow."*

*It's what the prophets promise us during Advent."*

Tomorrow does come and we ring in Christmas. Christ is born, and all is made new! Christmas is the shortest season of the church year, with only 12 days to celebrate.

From last year's Christmas Eve:

*"Viewing the television cartoon, A Charlie Brown Christmas, is a holiday tradition for many people. A favorite scene is when Linus, standing on a bare stage, recites the story of the birth of Jesus from the gospel of Luke.*

*That scene nearly didn't make it into the show. TV network executives thought it too religious, and the reading from Luke simply too lengthy. But the producers persisted, the scene stayed and it became a cherished moment.*

*There's one feature of that scene that not many people notice. Just before Linus begins his recitation, he drops his security blanket.*

Continued on page 2.

Anyone who's familiar with the character of Linus knows he's never without his blanket. Over the years of drawing his comic strip, Charles Schulz would occasionally deprive Linus of his blanket... Every time this happens, this otherwise cool, calm and wise-beyond-his-years character dissolves into frenzied angst. Linus simply cannot be without his blanket. Except in this moment, when he's standing on stage reciting the Christmas story. With the Christ child on his mind, it seems, he doesn't need it."

But Mary and Joseph did not tarry in Bethlehem, and neither do we. Once the Magi visit at Epiphany, we move quickly to the baptism of Jesus, the announcement of who he is. He calls his disciples and it's off to work.

An illustration for Epiphany.

"In their book *Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life*, Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat recount the experience of author Frederick Buechner who, in his autobiographical book, *Telling Secrets*, 'breaks silence about a family secret: how his teenage daughter struggled with anorexia. There came a day when he, himself, was in the pits of despair, worried sick that his daughter would never get well again. But then, in a dark night, came a message of hope, from an unusual quarter.'

Buechner writes: 'I remember sitting parked by the roadside once, terribly depressed and afraid about my daughter's illness and what was going on in our family, when out of nowhere a car came along down the highway with a license plate that bore on it the one word out of all the words in the dictionary I needed most to see exactly then. The word was TRUST. What do you call a moment like that? Something to laugh off as the kind of joke life plays on us every once in a while? The word of God? I am willing to believe that maybe it was something of both, but for me it was an epiphany. The owner of the car turned out to be, as I suspected, a trust officer in a bank, and not long ago, having read an account I wrote of the incident somewhere, he found out where I lived and one afternoon brought me the license plate itself, which sits propped up on a bookshelf in my house to this day. It is rusty around the edges and a little battered, and it is also as holy a relic as I have ever seen.'"

There is so much going on...and my hope is that you will slow down and enjoy the anticipation of Advent, the joy of Christmas, and whatever Epiphany will unveil to you. A blessed Holiday season!

Pastor V.

## **LOST & FOUND**

Have you been here at St. John's, arrived home and realized you left something behind? If so, check our Lost and Found cabinet in the Foyer. It is under the credenza next to the Guest Book stand.

If you find items left behind around our complex, please place them in that cabinet. Please do not leave them lying where you found them.

Items of value are kept in the church office.

Please call Carolly Huth if you can't find what you are looking for at 826-0506.

## **Christmas Cookies Exchange**

Our Christmas Cookie exchange will be on Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, at 11am. Bakers sign up between 11/17 and 12/1. We'll have brunch, we'll have laughs and we'll go home with 6 dozen cookies. 1 doz of each kind in your group! Look for the sign up sheet the weekend of 11/17!

## **Women of the ELCA**

Well, mother nature caused us to cancel our Thankoffering Service but we will look forward to it again next year and hope it will be a more fall like day rather than a winter event.

Thankfully, we had selected our Christmas giving at the October meeting from the ELCA's Good Gifts catalog. We chose to give money for a water filter, a rooster, honeybees and a solar lantern. This catalog is chock full of good things one can contribute to help our global families enhance their lives and livelihood. Check out the ELCA website if you would like to know how you can contribute too. Some of our members have a catalog if you would like to check it out that way.

The year is coming to an end and that means we get to reflect and listen to the story of the birth of Jesus. As you prepare for the other events of the season, keep in mind what is really important as you go about your day and put the worries of the shopping, cooking, cleaning, wrapping, etc, etc in perspective. The gifts and food will be a memory, the house will get dirty and clean again but the kindness and thoughtfulness you share will touch someone forever. Just as the birth and life of Jesus has.

A New Years Thought:

Looking back may I be filled with gratitude;  
Looking forward, may I be filled with hope;  
Looking upward, may I be aware of strength;  
Looking inward, may I find peace.

-unknown

Submitted by Connie Arnold

## Birthday and Anniversary Form

If you would like your birthday or anniversary listed, fill out this form, bring or send to church and put in the bag on the counter or email the information to church and Amy will get it to the right person.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday (month and day only) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Anniversary date including year \_\_\_\_\_



This is the QR code for the St John's website. If you're not familiar, a QR code will take a mobile device directly to our web site, just by taking a picture of it.

## WHAT IS A THRIVENT ACTION TEAM?

**Thrivent Action** Teams are groups of volunteers who donate time and effort to help a charitable cause of their choice. As a **Thrivent** Financial benefit or associate member, **Thrivent** Financial will arm you with \$250 of seed money for your project.

If you want to learn more you can contact your Thrivent representative (Brian Makey) or talk to Mark Koepfel or Nancy Kessler.

The funds can be used to help pay for a Community dinner, a Youth event, an Outreach program and more.

You can learn more by checking out the web site below.

[https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/files/CA\\_Conversation\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/files/CA_Conversation_Guide.pdf)

### **Food Barrel for WS Food Pantry**

Needed for December and January are soup and canned pasta (ravioli, spaghetti, etc.), also park and beans.

As always, paper products are useful as well.



**HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAY TO:**

12/2 Diane Sloma  
12/9 Sandy Haase  
12/11 Karen Rothenberger  
12/11 Maxine Steiner  
12/12 Rick Wolf  
12/13 Bob Kulak  
12/18 Joey Tosetto  
12/20 Tracy Lumb  
12/20 Suzanne Schindler  
12/21 Daniel Abendschein  
12/21 Heather Gulas-Karazewski  
12/24 Lee Delaney  
12/24 Brian Fredericks  
12/24 Taylor Wolf  
12/25 Jason Perillo  
12/27 Kallie Kozanecki  
12/27 Natalie Napierala  
12/28 Michael Lollier



**HAPPY JANUARY BIRTHDAY TO:**

1/1 Jonathan Wolf  
1/4 Georgiana Napier  
1/7 Evelyn Hicks  
1/8 Trevor Hintzman  
1/9 Gracelyn Germano  
1/10 Christopher H. Gulas-Karaszewski  
1/10 Jean Stankowski  
1/14 Scott Luderman  
1/20 Graham Vosseller  
1/22 Sam Corless  
1/22 Debbie Dunphy  
1/23 Nick Barnhardt  
1/24 Russ Then

**HAPPY DECEMBER ANNIVESARY TO:**

12/16/1972 Bill and Sandy Marzahn  
12/29 Paul and Georgiana Napier

**ANYONE ENJOY  
DOING JIGSAW PUZZLES?**

- WHAT:** A Puzzle Library  
**WHERE:** The bookcase between the Fellowship Room and the Parish Hall  
**WHEN:** Whenever you would like to borrow one... just for fun.  
**HOW:** Look at those available and select the one that you like best. When you have completed the puzzle, please place the pieces in a zip lock bag, return it to the shelves and take another.  
**NOTE:** If you find that pieces are missing, please mark the box.

**ENJOY!!!**



**Note from property:**

In recent weeks, doors to the building have been left unlocked after hours. In some cases the door locks have been modified with the use of an allen wrench to hold the door lock in the open position.

Please, if you have a key to the building, it is your responsibility to see that the door you entered through is locked after leaving. In no case should a door lock be modified to remain in an open position.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Rick  
Building & Property manager



## Assisting Minister Schedule

	<b>9 AM</b>	<b>10:45 AM</b>
December 1	Jim Steiner	Caroline Rackl
December 8	Pat Lipka	Evelyn Hicks
December 15	Nathan Setlock	Nancy Kessler
December 22	Dawn Corless	Karen Rothenberger
December 24	5 pm Al Kerner	10 pm Adam Wolff
December 29	Jim Steiner	Caroline Rackl
January 5	Pat Lipka	Evelyn Hicks
January 12	Nathan Setlock	Nancy Kessler
January 19	Dawn Corless	Karen Rothenberger
January 26	Al Kerner	Adam Wolff

# ST. JOHN'S DINING OUT CLUB

We will NOT be dining out in December but:

All are welcome to join us:

**WHEN:** Thursday - JANUARY 23 - 6:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** ELMA TOWNE GRILLE

**ENTREES:** 10.99 & up entrees, appetizers, soups, salad bar, sandwich plates, wings, quesadillas

**DIRECTIONS:** Clinton St. & Bowen Rd. in Elma

**RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE DUE TO THE SIZE OF OUR GROUP. PLEASE SIGN UP ON THE SHEET ON THE COUNTER IN THE FOYER AND NAME WHO YOU ARE RIDING WITH.**

## RESTAURANT REVIEW:

**Pasquale's:** 15 of us dined in this local restaurant. Their soups are amazing! Good food, good service, no complaints.

**How will we choose our next restaurant?** A list of prospective restaurants is passed around and everyone places an X under their choice. The restaurant with the most Xs is the one we visit next. Here is your chance to try new restaurants, visit old favorites, meet new people and enjoy good company. All members of St. John's, your family and friends are always welcome to join us. Our contact person is Carolly Huth 826-0506.

Submitted by Carolly Huth

## Altar Guild

Well, it's that time of the year again. Easter lilies, tulips, hyacinths, and Pentecost geraniums have come and gone, now it's time for Christmas poinsettias orders!!! We appreciate all the support that you give to our organization to help beautify the church for these special services here at St. John's. This Christmas we will again be selling Poinsettias for \$6.00 per plant. Order forms can be found in this Crossbeam or in the church bulletins on Dec 1, 8, or 15. Please place your money or check made payable to St. John's Altar Guild in the box found in the foyer or mail to the church with Att. Altar Guild. Thank you in advance!!!

The Guild wishes everyone a VERY BLESSED MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY 2020!!!

The members of the Altar Guild want to give a SPECIAL THANKS to the Monday morning men's work group. They give of their time and talents to do so many extras around the building and grounds and helping us with the filling of the candles and changing of the paraments and miscellaneous items as needed!!



Thank you, Lord, for the duty---and the delight----of worship!!!! (Reference 2 Chronicles chapter 5 vs. 13)

Submitted by Nancy Weber

## Monthly Community Dinner

The Christmas party will be on December 27th and we will be serving pizza and chicken wing soup.

January's dinner is on 01/31/20 and we will be serving goulash & salad.

We will offer drinks and dessert with the meal.

The meal is served 4pm—6:30pm or until we run out, whichever comes first.

The meal is provided for ANYONE in need of food, fellowship or fun... As always, the food, the seat and the smiles are FREE but good will offerings are always accepted.

Bible study continues:

December 5<sup>th</sup>: Matthew 3: 1-2

December 12<sup>th</sup>: Matthew 11: 2-11

December 19<sup>th</sup>: Matthew: 1: 18-25

January 9<sup>th</sup>: Matthew 3: 12-17

January 16<sup>th</sup> John 1: 29-42

January 23<sup>rd</sup> Matthew 4: 12-23

## **Hands and Hearts Ministry**

The members of the Hands and Hearts Knitting Ministry of St. John's Lutheran Church would like to extend an invitation to everyone to join our small but dedicated group. We knit and crochet Prayer Shawls for those in need of healing warmth and christening caps to welcome newly baptized infant members. Throughout the year we also make items of outerwear for donation to groups in the community that pass them along to their clients. We welcome everyone from those wishing to learn the craft to the expert. The first Wednesday of every month at 7:00 PM in the Fellowship Room is our new meeting time. We have a small stock of tools to get new members started and look forward to welcoming you with a quiet evening of companionable conversation and needlework. If interested please contact Linda Wetzler (716)512-8106. Thank you.

**Seneca Babcock food drive will be from  
December 15<sup>th</sup> thru the end of January.**

Just a reminder that the recycling "rules" have changed a bit in West Seneca. Recycling will now be picked up every other week and while most everything we have previously recycled is the same, please note that ONLY NUMBERS 1 and 2 plastics can be recycled. Please make every effort to do this along with only other items that can be recycled since our containers fill up rapidly some weeks and having items in there that do not belong takes away from what we can properly recycle.

Items that can be recycled include: newspaper, office paper, phone books, paper bags, and junk mail. Also, paperboard, magazines and catalogs, cardboard and pizza boxes, jugs and bottles with small top openings( #1 and #2) only along with clear bottles and jars, aluminum cans, metal cookware and steel and tin cans.

Check out the list by the recycling bin in the kitchen for the list of what cannot be recycled. Thanks for doing your share to help out!

Fellowship Hour needs your help. It is so good to have so many share the time between worship services in the parish hall. This has posed a good problem to have. In order for the coffee hour clean up people to get to church on time, we need you to clean up your table space. Wipes are available or even your napkin will do as long as the table is cleaned up and ready for the next week.



**Poinsettia Order Form**  
\$6.00 per plant

Number ordered \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT

In loving memory of:

\_\_\_\_\_

In honor of:

\_\_\_\_\_

Given By:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please return to the church office by December 15th

Checks made payable to St. John's Altar Guild

## Hospitality Committee

### NO MORE SIGN UP SHEETS!

We are asking for team leaders and individuals who would be interested in becoming a team. For this to be successful, we need 10 to 12 teams (or more). Coffee hour is an important gathering for our church family. It gives us a chance to share news and concerns with each other. Please contact BethAnn Hintzman 668-0833 or Diane Molnar 675-2481 if you wish to help.

Thank you, Hospitality

**WANTED:** coupons from The Buffalo News Sunday paper. These coupons are mailed to Fort Bragg where our military personnel and their families can use them at their PX up to six months after the expiration date. Just drop them in the box on the counter in the Narthex and Sandy Stango will take it from there. Another way to support our troops and their families. Thanks, Sandy Stango

### ***Crossbeam Deadline***

Articles for the **February** issue of the Crossbeam are due by **January 12<sup>th</sup>**. Please e-mail your articles to Sue Koeppel ([sekoeppe@gmail.com](mailto:sekoeppe@gmail.com)) or leave them in the Crossbeam mailbox outside of the church office. Electronic articles are preferred, if at all possible.



## Ladies Aid

We ladies had a wonderful evening after a long break from meeting. We had a short meeting and then proceeded to bid on all of the mystery items that we brought. The winnings were fun, creative and heavy on the sweets. Sylvia managed to get \$62.00 out of us (even though it was not easy trying to outbid Shirley Johnson!). We gladly rounded that number up to \$70.00 which we will add to our Food Pantry Donation. We made our other annual donations to Meals on Wheels, Harvest House, and to St. John's Mortgage Reduction Fund.

Sandy continues to send out many cards to our church families for the holidays, get well, sympathy and thinking of you. The cost of postage is shared with WELCA and Sandy has been known to buy a roll on her own for that too. We are happy to have this shared ministry for the congregation and thank Sandy for doing such a thoughtful and thorough job.

By the time you read this, we will be getting ready to go to Ilio's for our annual Christmas luncheon. There may still be time to make a reservation with Sandy if you would like to come. It is an afternoon of good food and fellowship. We will once again be taking contributions for the Kathleen Mary House. See Sandy Haase if you have any questions on this. Special thanks goes to Sandy Stango who made many hats and scarfs for winter which Sandy already took out there and they were most grateful for this lovely handmade donation for their resident families. Thanks again Sandy for sharing your talents!

Wishing you peace and happiness as we remember what the birth of our Lord has brought to us.

Submitted by Connie Arnold

## Sunday Church School

Mark these dates on your calendars:

Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup>: Celebrating the 1<sup>st</sup> day of ADVENT! Christmas Carol singing in the Parish Hall during the Sunday School hour! Grown ups, we welcome you to attend with your student! Please bring in a kuchen or coffee cake to share!

Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 9am: Christmas program

Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup>: No Sunday School

Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup>: Sunday School resumes

Sunday, January 12<sup>th</sup>: Epiphany Party during the Sunday School hour  
We're looking for a coordinator for this event, please let Kathy Moody or Sandy Haase know if you are interested!

## Usher Schedule

	9 am	10:45 am
December 1	Don Denzel Tom Mudd	Ron Wirth Keith Lang
December 8	Lee Delaney Brian Napierala	Sue Koepfel Jeff Kline
December 15	Brian Napierala Tom Kalinowski	Lowell Rothenberger Charlie Arnold
December 22	Lee Delaney Tom Mudd	Sue Koepfel Jedd Kline
December 29	Jim Ridley Susan Ridley	Lowell Rothenberger Charlie Arnold

## Greeter Schedule

	9 am	10:45 am
December 1	Connie Arnold Carol Delaney	Marie Basher Janet Mcleod
December 8	Edythe Fisher Maxine Steiner	Chris Charnock Wayne Charnock
December 15	Diana Kalinowski Diane Molnar	Marie Ramey Janet Hender
December 22	Connie Arnold Carol Delaney	Marie Basher Janet Mcleod
December 29	Edythe Fisher Maxine Steiner	Chris Charnock Wayne Charnock

# INDEX

Assisting Ministers	9
Altar Guild	11, 15
A Word from Pastor Valerie	1-2
Bible Study	12
Birthdays & Anniversaries	6
Community Dinner	12
Dining Out Club	10
Food Pantry	5
Greeters	19
Ladies Aid	17
Lost and Found	3
Sunday Church School	18
Ushers	19
WELCA	4