

January, 2010

# The Peace Post

Peace Lutheran Church ~ Alma, MI

## From the Desk of Pastor Messer “Come to Bethlehem and See . . .”



It always seems like such a huge letdown, doesn't it? The days after Christmas, I mean. The days before are filled with excitement and anticipation. We can't wait to exchange gifts and get together with family and friends. This is especially true for many children, who can hardly get to sleep the night before Christmas, so anxious are they to see their presents the next morning. But, then it's all over in a flash. The gifts are ripped open, time is spent with family and friends, and then it's back to reality. That emotional high we experience may last until New Year's, but usually we've already come crashing down from it by then.

This is experienced in the Church as well, although it shouldn't be. The Sunday after Christmas is comparable to the Sunday after Easter in that it is one of the lowest attended Sundays of the year. It is as though people view these two Sundays in the year as rather anti-climactic, having just participated in the high feast celebrations of our Lord's Nativity and Resurrection. But, as I said, that shouldn't be the case for us in the Church. Why? Because EVERY Divine Service in the Lord's House is a celebration of our Lord's Birth, Death, and Resurrection for us. Every Divine Service is a "little Christmas," "a little Good Friday," and "a little Easter."

Thus, we need not have the "post-Christmas blues" in the Church, for Christmas is a year-round celebration for us. We see this marked in the Divine Liturgy as we sing the song of the holy angels in the "Gloria in Excelsis" and we experience it most fully when we gather at the altar to receive the very Body and Blood of our Lord Incarnate, who was born to be our Savior and our Food.

So it is that the stanza in the famous carol, "Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing; Come adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King," is not just an invitation to the shepherds in the field that Holy Night long ago, but a standing invitation to us. We come to Bethlehem every time we gather together for Divine Service. Bethlehem means "House of Bread" and is located wherever two or three (or more) gather together in the Presence of the One who is the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Word who became Flesh and dwelt among us continues to do so in the Holy Eucharist. He was born and placed in a manger (i.e. feeding trough), and now, having lived, died, risen, and ascended for us, He places Himself upon the manger of the altar to be our Food and Drink, that, partaking of His very Body and Blood, we would be strengthened and preserved in the one, true faith.

Come to Bethlehem and see, my friends. Come to the Divine Service often, for you will experience Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter each and every time you do!

Your servant in Christ,

*Pastor Messer*



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## **“Why Go to the Divine Service?”**

**By Rev. Shane R. Cota**  
**Pastor at St. John Lutheran (Hayes)**  
**and Trinity Lutheran (Maple Valley)**  
**in Suring, WI**

*What follows is an excellent article, which Pastor Cota posted on his blog ([www.pastorcota.blogspot.com](http://www.pastorcota.blogspot.com)) in early December. I thought it prudent to include it here, since it fleshes out what I wrote in my article on the front page, and since this is the time of the year when we are inclined to make “New Year’s resolutions.” What better resolution could we make than to be in the Lord’s House for Divine Service as often as possible in the new year? Pastor Cota provides a detailed summary as to why this is so important. I hope you will read and take it to heart.*

As church attendance continues to decline in many congregations, we need to be reminded just how important it is for Christians to attend the services of the church. First of all, who is the church? The church is the congregation of saints, the people of God, among whom the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments (such as Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord’s Supper) are rightly administered. The Gospel and the Sacraments are the “lifeblood” of a Christian (and of the whole church of believers), because it is through these very means, as through instruments, that our Lord comes to the sinner to bring him to repentance and to bestow on him the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Those who have been baptized continue in their Christian life by gathering with their fellow believers to hear the Word and receive the Body and Blood of Christ. Gathering for services of the Word and the Sacraments (where God serves you with these good gifts so that you may continue in the faith and be saved) is not optional or an occasional “extra” for the Christian life, but rather is the very center of your life in Christ.

Just being baptized or being on the “membership list” of a congregation does not make you a Christian if you do not continue to hear the Word and continually abide in Christ. As Jesus says, “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.” (John 15:4) Christians “abide” in Christ. Many are under the false perception that if they “believe in Jesus” (or at least think they do), they don’t need to go to church, when in reality it is people who believe in Jesus who indeed do go to church, that they may continue to “abide” in Christ. Again, it is in the preaching of the Word and in the Sacraments where Christ has promised to be for us for the salvation of our souls.

Just “saying” you believe in Christ, and using His name and thinking that saves you apart from hearing the Word and receiving the Sacraments is a false delusion and has led you to a false security that may end up damning you. As Jesus says when speaking of the day of judgment, “*Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’*” (Mat 7:21-23) How horrible it will be on that day for those who must hear these dreaded words from the mouth of the Lord, “*I never knew you, depart from me...*” But how could He have ever known you, if you have refused His coming to you though His Word and in His Sacraments? Saying that you believe in Jesus, and rarely hearing His Word or receiving His very Body and Blood is like telling your spouse that you love him or her, but never spending any time at all talking to, or seeing, him or her. That is no love at all, but a lie.

Our Lord has given us the command to hear His Word in the Ten Commandments. As we learn in the Catechism: “*What is the Third Commandment? Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. What does this mean? We should fear*

*Saying you believe in Jesus, and rarely hearing His Word or receiving His very Body and Blood is like telling your spouse that you love him or her, but never spending any time at all talking to, or seeing, him or her. That is no love at all, but a lie.*

*and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.”* We despise God’s Word when we refuse or deliberately neglect opportunities to hear it, for

hearing the Word is something we should do “gladly.” If you are not glad to hear the Word, then how can you consider yourself to be a believer? Why does God give us this commandment? Is it because He wants to burden us with “having” to go to the Divine Service? No. He gives us this commandment for our own good, so that we may not neglect His Gospel gifts and so that ultimately we can be with Him in His eternal kingdom. He knows how the world, the devil, and our own sinful flesh easily become weak and cause us to drift from the faith that saves, so He has provided His services of Gospel and Sacrament, so that we may be strengthened and nourished and kept in the one true faith as we wander in the wilderness of this life. The services of the Gospel and Sacraments are given to us out of love for us, for our own eternal good, so we should be devoted to them.

In Acts, chapter 2, after many of the people became Christians through the preaching of the Word and Baptism on the day of Pentecost, we are told what the believers did after converting to faith in Christ. We are told that “*...they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*” (Acts 2:42) Christians are “devoted to” 1) the apostles’ teaching, which is the preaching of the Word; 2) the fellowship, which

is the gathering together of Christians to be in communion with one another; 3) the breaking of the bread, which is the Lord's Supper; and 4) the prayers, which is the church making petitions to God and praising Him. This is exactly what Christians do when they gather for the Divine Services of the church (as Christians have historically done). In fact, they are devoted to this, because this is the very center of the Christian life and Christ is at the center of these things for us and for our salvation. This passage from Acts describes what the Christian is devoted to after his Baptism into Christ. And parents who have their children baptized, if they care about the eternal salvation of their children, will bring their children up in this faith and practice. In Acts 2, Peter says the promise is for the people and their children. This is why Lutheran day schools and Sunday schools are important as well. We need to take seriously what Moses said to the Israelites: *"You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates..."* (Deu 11:18-20) This is how much our lives should be saturated with the Word of God, not only for our own benefit, but for the benefit of our children as well.

The apathy and indifference of Christians toward the services, schools, Sunday School and Bible studies of the church is astounding. We still live in a country where we are free to attend services and believe in the one true God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In some countries, people literally die to go to church! And yet we sit here with all our comforts and could not care less. If people who profess to be Christians and allow their names to stand on congregational membership lists don't even take the faith seriously, why should anyone else? Why is church attendance often so poor? There is no excuse for this. We need it more than anything else in the world. And no, it is not a good excuse to not come to church because you don't "like" the pastor, or you don't "like" some of the people, or you don't like "having" to stand up, or you don't like doing similar services all the time, or because your favorite hymns aren't always sung, or because the service is too long, or because it is your only day to go shopping, or to sleep in, and so on and so on. When an excuse pops into your head, just think, "Would God be pleased to hear this excuse from me on Judgment Day?" And besides, Christians don't look for excuses not to go to church. Are the Law and Gospel preached and are the Sacraments correctly administered in the services? If so, then you have no excuse. If you cannot come to the services due to infirmities of some sort, notify the pastor, and he will come to you.

Let us hear encouragement from the book of Hebrews. The author is addressing the very same problem we face here: *"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us*

*consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries."* (Heb 10:23-27) Either Christ will come again in glory or we will die before that. Either way, we need to be prepared, or we will be caught unaware and be damned forever, which would be completely senseless, because God has graciously given us His means all along so that we may escape the day of wrath and be saved. This is no joke. It is deadly serious and has eternal consequences. As the church here in this place, we must pray that we may be led to repentance for thinking little of God's Word and Sacraments and pray that all who have fallen away may be returned to the fold, so that we may all at last gather around the Lamb who was slain, so that we may sing His praises eternally in the peace and joy of His presence.

When you come to the Divine Service, you are partaking of heavenly worship itself. In the book of Revelation, the apostle John gets to see the veil between heaven and earth pulled aside, while he is worshiping "in the Spirit," "on the Lord's Day." He sees the heavenly worship and describes it in Revelation 4, 5, 7, and other places. While we cannot see behind the veil between heaven and earth, we can be certain that the services where Christ Himself is present are no small thing and that there is much more going on than we can ever see now. In the book of Hebrews, we are told what we are coming to when we come to the Divine Service: *"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken--that is, things that have been made--in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."* (Heb 12:22-29) That says it all. No matter how plain the services may appear to us, or how ordinary or insignificant, God tells us that much more is going on than we can now see. May we abide in Christ now, so that one day we shall see the other side of the veil, which is more than we could even take right now. Lord, have mercy.

## *A Thank You from Pastor Messer*

*Thank You*

A huge thank you to all of you who gave towards the collection gathered for my family and me this Christmas. I was deeply touched when Elder Larry Elliott presented me with the card in the Fellowship Hall after Service on Dec. 20, and simply blown away when I got home and discovered what that card contained! What an absolute blessing it is for me to be serving the Lord's flock here at Peace. Thank you so much for your generosity! I also want to thank all of you who sent our family Christmas cards and who presented me and my family with other Christmas gifts and goodies. Thanks again to all of you. It means more than you could possibly know!

With love,

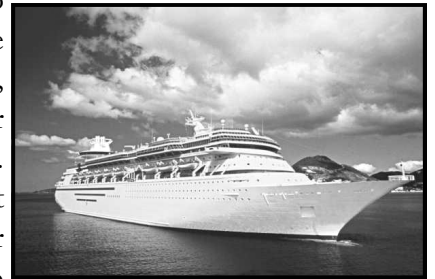
*Pastor Messer*

## *Pastor and Lisa Messer Cruising the Caribbean*

If you haven't heard by now, Lisa and I were presented with a very unexpected and extremely generous gift recently. A friend of ours, named Brenda, who recently experienced a financial windfall, surprised us by booking us on a 7-day Caribbean Cruise with her family. She is paying for our round trip flight, the cruise, and some excursions while at port during the cruise. The only thing Lisa and I will have to spring for is the occasional piña colada or margarita to enjoy while basking in the sun. We could hardly allow such a rare and wonderful opportunity to pass us by, so, after much thought and reflection (okay, so maybe it was only a second or two of thought and reflection☺), we decided to accept this invitation and gift. We will fly down to Florida in the morning on January 16 and set sail later that afternoon, returning home in the evening on January 23. Please keep us in your prayers while we are away. Pastor Sam Reith (Zion, Mt. Pleasant) has agreed to be available to you should a pastoral emergency arise in my absence (989-772-1516—office; 989-775-6228—home). Pastor Reith may also conduct the Divine Service here at Peace on January 17 (if not, our elders will lead the Service of Prayer and Preaching).

In Christ,

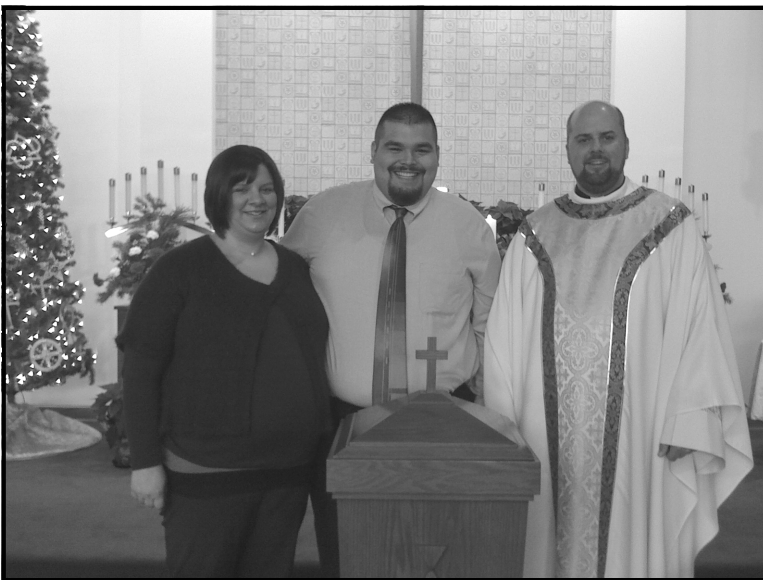
*Pastor Messer*



## *Welcome Kyle and Jilian Stahl*

We were blessed to welcome two new members into our fellowship during Divine Service on December 27. Kyle was baptized into our Lord's Kingdom and then he, and his wife, Jilian, were both brought into our fellowship through Adult Confirmation. It was a true joy to get to know this wonderful young couple during our catechetical sessions together and I am thrilled to have them join us. They will also be assisting us in the old fashioned way of church growth soon, as they are expecting their first child (a daughter), who is due in February, but may arrive on the scene a little earlier. Please welcome them and please keep them in your prayers as they await the arrival of their child.

- Pastor Messer



# Synopsis of October 25, 2009 Voters' Assembly Minutes

## Call To Order & Opening Prayer

President Brown called the meeting to order at 11:18am. 29 voting members were present. Pastor Messer conducted the opening prayer.

## Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Chris Brown, supported by Gary Miller to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

## Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Gary Miller, supported by Chris Brown to approved the minutes from July 26 & September 20 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

## Report(s)

- **Pastor** – Pastor Messer informed the Assembly about Secret Pals and the afternoon with Matt Harrison. Pastor Messer also discussed concerns about the following members of the congregation: Mike and Anna Gilbert, Bill and Beth Brostrom, Dick and Darlene Palmer, Lois Miller, Burt, Cheryl, Alex, Jordan and BJ Henry, Carol Durst, Jeff, Cheryl, Jenna, Megan, Jared and Jayce Kuehnlein and Leland and Marilyn Oswald. Transfers were requested and granted for the Gilbert's and Brostrom's and a transfer was pending for the Henry's. He issued a letter to the remaining members and gave a date of October 30 for a response. If no response was received, they were to be released by self-exclusion. A motion was made by Larry Elliott, supported by Gary Miller to honor the October 30 date for response and to release the applicable members by self-exclusion if no response was received. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Treasurer** – Carol Zeile presented the attached report, which showed a comparison of FY2008 to FY2009.
- **Financial Secretary** – Gary Miller informed the Assembly that he was preparing the third quarter financial statements.

## Boards

- **Board of Elders** – Larry Elliott informed the Assembly that the elders had been working with Pastor regarding the member concerns. Larry Elliott had been elected as a lay delegate to attend the Synodical Convention in July 2010. Larry also shared information regarding the Afternoon with Matt Harrison.
- **Board of Trustees** – Vern Jakolat informed the Assembly of projects including: new fire extinguishers, winter furnace inspection, installation of new water heater and lawn maintenance.
- **Board of Christian Education** – Sharyn Greening informed the Assembly that the children's Christmas program would be on December 23 with practices on Sundays after Sunday School.
- **Board of Evangelism** – No report.
- **Board of Stewardship** – No report.
- **Organization and Committee Reports**
- **Peace Lutheran Ladies Guild** – No report.
- **Peace Youth Group** – No report.

## Business

- **Election of Officers** – The following candidates were presented for the following offices:
  - President – Chris Brown
  - Financial Secretary – Gary Miller
  - Board of Christian Education – Janice Sager
  - Board of Elders – Miguel Ortiz
  - Board of Trustees – Daren Johnson
- Motion made by Vern Jakolat, supported by Larry Elliott to close the nominations and elect the slate as presented. Motion withdrawn before vote was taken.
- Motion made by Sharyn Greening, supported by Gary Miller to elect two Board of Christian Education positions, adding Andrea Elliott, and to accept the revised ballot as presented. Motion carried unanimously. All officers elected and to be installed during Divine Service on January 3.

## Adjournment & Closing Prayer

Motion made by Gary Miller, supported by Jon Penzien to adjourn at 12:55pm. Motion carried unanimously. Pastor Messer led the Lord's Prayer and closed with the Benediction.

Respectfully submitted,  
Megan Brown, Secretary

(Note: Complete minutes with all attachments are available in the church office for review.)

## **Synopsis of December 1, 2009 Church Council Minutes**

### **Call To Order & Opening Prayer**

- President Brown called the meeting to order at 7:01pm. The following members were present: Chris Brown, Vern Jakolat, Sharyn Greening, Gary Miller, Megan Brown, Carol Zeile, Larry Elliott, Ken Hill (7:07pm), and Carolyn Johnson (7:33pm). Pastor Messer was also present.

### **Approval of Agenda**

- Motion made by President Brown, supported by Treasurer Zeile to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

- Motion made by Treasurer Zeile, supported by Financial Secretary Miller to approved the minutes from November 10. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Report(s)**

- **Pastor** – Pastor Messer presented the attached report. The Council received the report into record.
- **Treasurer's Report** – Treasurer Zeile informed the Council that the SALT committee gave \$300 towards the Peace Youth Group loan. There was also a donation of \$35 to the Christian Care Fund.
- **Financial Secretary** – No report.
- **Boards**
  - **Board of Elders** – No report.
  - **Board of Trustees** – Councilmember Jakolat informed the Council of projects including: hallway lights, parking lot lights, outdoor electrical receptacles, soffit repair, and the snow plow agreement with the hospital.
  - **Board of Christian Education** – Councilmember Greening informed the Council that the children's program will be on December 23. The Sunday School classes are continuing their study of the liturgy.
  - **Board of Evangelism** – No report.
  - **Board of Stewardship** – No report.
- **Organization and Committee Reports**
  - **Peace Lutheran Ladies Guild** – No report.
  - **Peace Youth Group** – No report.

### **Business**

- **2010 Budget** – The Council continued to discuss the proposed 2010 budget. Motion made by Councilmember Elliott, supported by Financial Secretary Miller, to present the proposed budget, pending the final insurance amount, to the Voters Assembly. Motion carried unanimously.

### **General Comment**

- Councilmember Elliott is continuing to work with Bob Eldridge regarding the landscape plan. A meeting will be held on January 12 to meet with Bob and offer suggestions.

### **Adjournment & Closing Prayer**

- The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm. Pastor Messer led the Lord's Prayer and closed with the Benediction.

Respectfully submitted,  
Megan Brown, Secretary

(Note: Complete minutes with all attachments are available in the church office for review.)

# PEACE NEWS & NOTES

## PYG NEWS

January Events

### MONTHLY MEETING

Sunday, January 17 - 5pm-7pm

Fellowship Hall

### PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Sundays during Fellowship

Youth Room

Greetings in Christ,

Welcome to the new year that the Lord has set before us. Let us all be thankful for the blessings and time that he has given us in 2009. The Youth were once again able to send a group of Youth to the Higher Things Gathering. We have started a new meeting layout that is focusing time on the study of the Lord's Word.

I want to thank the entire congregation for your support of the Youth. Your support of their projects are greatly appreciated.

The new year has many opportunities for the Youth. This year we will be focusing more on the local growth and outreach of the Youth. If you have any ideas of projects or activities for the Youth, please let us know. Thank you all again and may the Lord bless and keep you through the coming year.

May the Spirit of the Lord be  
with you,

Jonathan Penzien



## THANK YOU

. . . to the volunteers assisted in preparing bulletins for our Christmas programs and services: Lois Ramsey, Megan Brown, Sharyn Greening, and Yvonne Elenbaas. A special thank you to Charlotte Dargie who helps regularly each week during the year. It would not be possible to "get the job done" without the help of our volunteers.



## LADIES GUILD ANNUAL COOKIE WALK AND CRAFT SHOW

### MANY THANKS

The Ladies Guild extends a hearty "THANK YOU" to everyone who helped this year--to the ladies of Peace for baking the delicious and colorful cookies and to all who helped with setup and cleanup.

## CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Thank you to:

- Pastor for writing the program and helping the children rehearse.
- Andrea Elliot and Carol Zeile, who also helped with rehearsal and costumes.
- the Sunday School students who worked hard to memorize their lines and practice the hymns. You did a fantastic job!
- Andrea Elliot, Marlene Miller and Carol Zeile for preparing lunch for the children before rehearsals.
- Sally Pease for the suckers made for the Sunday School children. They really liked them!
- Mary Jakolat for playing the organ for the program, helping the children practice their hymns, and spending extra time with those who sang solos and duets.
- Sarah Messer, Myka Luplow, Paige Harwager and Natalie Penzien for their solos and duets
- all the parents for helping their children prepare for the program.

--all of you who attended the Christmas program. The teachers and children appreciate your support.

- - - Sharyn  
Greening



# PEACE NEWS & NOTES Cont'd

## S.A.L.T. NEWS

*Sharing with All the Love and Truth of Jesus Christ!*

### **ADOPT-A-FAMILY**

*The S.A.L.T. Committee would like to thank everyone who brought gifts and food items for the Adopt-A-Family project. Gifts and boxed/canned foods were given to both of our Peace Lutheran Church families on Sunday, December 20 and were well received. The families were appreciative of the generosity from our congregation.*

### **CHRISTMAS CAROLING**

*Carol Zeile, Lois Ramsey, Mary Jakolat, Lisa and Pastor Messer, Carolyn and Morgan Johnson, Andrea and Benjamin Elliott, and Marlene Miller visited and sang for our shut-ins Joan Burch, Georgia Spindler, Freda Hill, Dick Wiser, Violet Byers, and Connie Cook. A good time was had by all.*

### **SUPER BOWL PARTY**

We will be gathering at the home of Megan and Chris Brown to celebrate Super Bowl Sunday on February 7. Please watch for more information in our next newsletter or bulletins.



The next S.A.L.T. meeting will be held on January 7 at 6:30 pm. We would love to have you join us as we seek to put some of our plans into action.

## **CHURCH BUILDING FACE LIFT**

Now that we have cut down the pine trees that have been hiding (and damaging) our church for many years, it is time to begin talking about new plants. With a gift, we have hired a Master Gardner, Bob Eldridge, to provide a design to make our church stand out from amongst the neighboring doctors' offices. We have set up a time to have an initial meeting with Mr. Eldridge, and we would like to encourage all interested members to attend and provide feedback about what you would like to see in front of church. Mr. Eldridge will use the information gathered here to develop a design that meets our needs in terms of colors, the amount of maintenance required, and even any specific plants we desire. This meeting will be held at **7:00 PM on Tuesday, January 12, in the Fellowship Hall.** Please, contact the Elliotts at 463-2604 if you have questions or concerns.

### ***Ladies Lunch Bunch***

*We will meet at The Main Café in Alma for lunch at 1:30 pm on Monday, January 11.*

*All ladies of Peace are welcome and also may invite a guest—someone without a church or someone living alone. Please enter your name on the signup list posted in Fellowship Hall and join us!*

*"Dear Carolers,  
Thank you all very much for coming to carol for me. It was so very good to see all of you. Thank you also for the cookies. I am sharing them with the workers here. They don't get homemade cookies very often, so it is a treat for them. I hope all of you had Merry Holidays, and the New Year will be a good one for all of you.*

*In Christian Love,  
Georgia" (Spindler)*



# PEACE NEWS & NOTES Cont'd

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

UNITED STATES CENSUS 2010

NOW HIRING

TESTING IN OUR AREA NEXT WEEK

HIRING FOR:

- Crew Leaders \$15.25/hr
- Crew Leader Assistants \$13.75/hr
- Enumerators \$13.75/hr

RECEIVE PAID TRAINING  
AND MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

Training will be held either during daytime hours or during evening and weekend hours.

Employment Information brochures are available in Fellowship hall with detailed information.

CALL

CENSUS JOBS

866-861-2010

## QUARTERLY VOTERS' ASSEMBLY SUNDAY, JANUARY 24

11:00 a.m.

## TABLE TALK

Our Table Talks are informal and informative discussions with Pastor Messer on various topics decided by the group in attendance. Plus, THEY'RE FUN! Our next Table Talk will take place on **Thursday, January 14 at 7 pm** at the home of Chris and Megan Brown. All are invited. We hope you'll be able to join us!



## PEACE MOVIE NIGHT

Friday, January 29

**Movie yet to be determined—look for info soon!**

6:30 pm—Pizza and beverages

7:00 pm—Showtime

*Pizza and beverages provided by SALT*

*Freewill offering collected*

*Bring comfy chair and snacks if you wish.*

*Hope you'll join us!*



## Issues, Etc.™

Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio

If you have not listened to Issues, Etc. lately, you simply do not know what you are missing! This is the absolute best Christian radio program gracing the airwaves today, bar none. You can listen to what you want, when you want, by going to [www.issuesetc.org](http://www.issuesetc.org) and clicking on "Listen," then "On Demand Archives." We also have CDs available in the Fellowship hall for you to check out anytime.

In order to support this Christ-centered, Cross-focused Worldwide Outreach, our congregation has pledged to be a part of the "Issues, Etc. 300," which consists of 300 LCMS congregations that give \$1000 (or more) annually. In doing so, our congregation is advertised during the program, on the Issues, Etc. website, and in the Issues, Etc. Journal. In order to fulfill our pledge, we need help. We have budgeted \$500.00, but we need to collect the remaining \$500.00 in donations. Please consider helping us do so. This is money extremely well spent, as Issues, Etc. is bringing the pure Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to people all over the world.

If you would like to give a donation to help our congregation fulfill our pledge, please see Pastor Messer and make checks payable to Peace. Thanks in advance for your support!

**DID YOU KNOW** that the hospital does not notify us when one of our members has been hospitalized? Please call the church office at 463-5754 or Pastor Messer at 989-388-2037 (cell) when a member of Peace has been admitted to the hospital.

## PASTOR MESSER IS BLOGGING!

[www.abideinmyword.blogspot.com](http://www.abideinmyword.blogspot.com)

*Check in from time to time  
to see what's on his mind.*



Abide In My Word!

# Ladies' Guild

## Ladies' Guild Meeting

Our next meeting will be **Monday, January 4 at 7pm**. Hostess will be Mary Jakolat. All Ladies of the congregation are invited to attend our Guild meetings. If you are a confirmed female member of Peace, you are a member of Guild. We would sincerely encourage you to participate and be an active member of the Guild.

## PLC Women's Prayer Chain

The updated list is posted on the Ladies' Guild Bulletin Board. All participants should have received a copy. If you wish to be added to the prayer chain as a caller, or if you wish to have yourself or someone else "sent through the chain," please see or call Marlene Miller at 463-3710.

## Altar Flowers

There is a flower calendar for 2010 posted on the fellowship hall bulletin board. We are now working toward ordering altar flower arrangements that coordinate with and enhance the liturgical colors of each Season of the Church year. Depending on the dates, flowers may not always be displayed for a calendar month. Some Seasons of the Church year cross calendar months. If you wish to place flowers on the altar sometime during the year, please put your name on the calendar and contact the church office with any information that you wish to have included in the bulletin. If there is a specific date in the month that commemorates an occasion, please also enter that date. A bouquet costs \$25. We encourage two persons (families) to purchase flowers each month, one for each plant stand. Please make checks payable to Peace Lutheran Church, attach a note marked "Altar Flowers" and place in the Financial Secretary's envelope in the church office. Any questions may be directed to Carol Zeile. Thank you for helping to beautify our chancel.

## PEACE LUTHERAN LADIES GUILD

AND



**Ladies Guild is collecting the following items to send to Lutheran World Relief:**

- 2 - receiving blankets
- 2—shirts
- 2 - gowns or sleepers
- 4 - cloth diapers
- 1 - sweater
- 2 - washcloths
- 1 - bath-size bar of soap
- 2 - diaper pins

Wrap the items in one of the receiving blankets and secure with diaper pins.

Collection Dates:

January 1, 2010 to March 31, 2010

## Altar Care



### January

Marlene Miller  
Charlotte Dargie

### February

Sally Pease

### March

Carol Zeile

## Coffee Hostesses

### January

3 Carol Zeile  
10 Tina Schafer  
17 Peace Youth Group  
24 M. Miller/C. Dargie  
31 Janice Sager

### February

7 Jennie Harmon  
14 Y. Elenbaas/M. Girard  
21 S. Greening/M. Brown  
28 Carolyn Johnson

### March

7 Andrea Elliott  
14 Jo Wendt  
21 Cassie Tennant  
28 Jenny Baughman



# *Ladies' Guild (continued)*

## SUMMARY OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH LADIES' GUILD MINUTES DECEMBER 7, 2009

### Officers and Committee Chairpersons

President: Coaline Luplow – Vice-President: Carol Zeile – Secretary: Lois Ramsey – Treasurer: Sharyn Greening –

Banner Committee: Gretchen Harrison – Altar Committee: Carol Zeile – Kitchen Committee: Coaline Luplow and Lois Ramsey –

Sunshine Committee: Marlene Miller – Library Committee: Coaline Luplow – Special Events Committee: Coaline Luplow and Lois Ramsey

**Opening Prayer/Devotion:** The meeting opened with a prayer by Vice-President Carol Zeile. President Coaline Luplow's work schedule prevented her from attending. Carol presented the devotion for the day from "Higher Things Reflections". The Mite basket was passed and Mites collected.

**Secretary's Report:** Approved as presented.

**Treasurer's Report:** Sharyn Greening reported that the tentative amount generated from the Cookie Walk and Craft Show was \$1,640.81. An application was submitted to Thrivent Financial for \$420 available from the Care in Congregation funds. Fund balances are: Savings, \$2,355.29. Checking, \$654.98. The Guild Christmas gift of \$100 to our Seminary Student has not been sent yet due to the lack of a current address for him. The Treasurer's Report was approved as presented.

### Committee Reports:

- **Altar:** Carol read a portion from the LCMS Altar Guild Manual. She informed the ladies that banners and superfrontals (and matching chalice veils and bookmarks) have been purchased for all the seasons of the Church Year now. Final preparations for Christmas decorating was also discussed.
- **Banner:** One of the older banners needs repair. Gretchen will meet with Pastor to discuss the banners.
- **Kitchen:** An inventory of the kitchen supplies was done and needed supplies were purchased. Balance in the coffee fund as of Dec. 7 was \$66.42. The Rada cutlery was discussed and a conscious effort to make it known throughout the congregation will be taken. *Motion made by Sharyn, support by Charlotte, that a container be purchased for the cutlery, and that it be displayed one Sunday a month and be made available for purchase at that time. Approved.*
- **Library:** No report.
- **Sunshine:** Cards are being sent. Marlene inquired about return address labels, if any had been ordered through the Church office and if there was a cost involved. Mary said that none had been ordered, but that she could make some at no cost.
- **Special Events:** Nothing new to report.

### Other Reports:

- **Charitable Donations:** Dorothy Trgina discussed the schedule that will be followed for collections for Lutheran World Relief in the coming year. Look for info on Ladies' Guild board.
- **Comments by Pastor:** Pastor Messer was not able to attend. However, on his behalf, the possibility of the Ladies' Guild making a donation toward our congregation's support of Issues, Etc. was discussed. Will be on agenda early in 2010.
- **Seminary Student Report:** The most recent letter from the seminary student is on the bulletin board.
- **Projects:** 1) Mary expressed the need for a suitable stand to hold the feast day bulletins. There is a little table in the sacristy that is currently not being used and it might work well for placing the bulletins and the offering plate; 2) A Prie Dieu kneeling bench for Pastor Messer was discussed. A catalogue with various pictures and prices was passed around for the ladies to view.

### Old Business:

- **Cookie Walk:** There were 656 dozen cookies, 18 crafters, and 19 workers.
- **Advent Dinners:** There will be a pot-luck dinner prior to the Children's Christmas Program.
- **Taking down Christmas decorations:** In past years the decorations have been taken down after Epiphany, and following that timeline the decorations would be taken down on Jan. 9. Because Feb. 2 is the date of The Presentation of our Lord, should the decorations be left until then? Pastor will be consulted.
- **Coffee Hostesses:** More coffee hostesses are needed for 2010.
- **Funeral Policy:** The funeral policy has been retyped, but Coaline advises that similar wording appears in the Special Events section of the handbook, and that section will also need re-typing.

### New Business:

- **Christmas Wreath:** We discussed purchasing a large outside wreath for the door at the fellowship hall. Last year's wreath cost \$78.86. Mary Jakolat said they purchased a large wreath for the outside of their home, but didn't use it. If her husband is agreeable, their wreath can be donated. While large, it is a smaller size than the wreath usually purchased.
- **Robes for acolytes:** The robes are in bad shape. This item will be considered next month.
- **Constitution:** The Ladies Guild Constitution is out-dated and needs to be revised to better reflect the structure of the current organization. Coaline, Carol, Sharyn, Lois, and Megan Brown will meet in January.

Upon the close of the meeting, the Ladies enjoyed a gift exchange with a Christmas Reading by Sharyn Greening.

Thank you to Marlene Miller and Charlotte Dargie for serving as hostesses for this meeting. The next meeting will be on January 4, 2010 with Mary Jakolat as hostess.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lois M. Ramsey, Secretary



### Registration Is Now Open for the 2nd Annual BJS National Conference!

The speakers for this year's conference will be Pastor Todd Wilken, host of Issues, Etc., Pastor Klemet Preus, author of "The Fire and the Staff," and Mollie Ziegler Hemingway, free-lance writer. Last year, a group of us from Peace attended and it was absolutely superb. With this year's lineup of speakers, it promises to be even better. The conference will be held at Bethany Lutheran Church, Naperville, Illinois (Chicago suburbs), begin with a welcome reception at 4:00 PM on Friday, February 12 and conclude on Saturday with lunch. The cost has been held at the same price as last year: \$40 for members, \$50 for non-members with a special \$60 rate that includes registration and one year of membership dues. If you are interested in attending the conference, please see Pastor Messer, or visit the BJS website ([www.steadfastlutherans.org](http://www.steadfastlutherans.org)) and click on the National Conference button in the right hand column. It would be wonderful to have an even larger group from Peace attend this excellent conference this year!

### A Prayer Upon Christmas from Starck's Prayer Book

O holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, would that every drop of my blood were a tongue, that I might praise Your love, grace and mercy!

God is love! This truth my heart and mind perceive on this holy festival. Your love has found a means for bringing grace to humanity, of which neither angels nor human beings would have dared to think! Namely, that the second person of the Godhead was to become man, to sanctify and cleanse our human nature. O gracious Jesus, everlasting praise and thanks to You for Your incarnation and birth. You became a child of man that we might become children of God. Now our human nature is truly exalted: You have united it with Your divinity, and brought it into the council of the Holy Trinity. O love! O grace! As surely as the human nature is united with the divine, so surely everlasting friendship, everlasting reconciliation, everlasting peace and everlasting love has been established between God and all people. When God beholds us in His Son, He cannot but be gracious to us. For He who spared not His beloved Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things – the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, peace, life, and salvation?

Oh, the greatness of the love of Jesus, who chose to be born a tender infant, that He might sanctify our sinful birth! He increased in wisdom and stature that He might sanctify our youth. Welcome to earth, O noble Guest, Through whom the sinful world is blest! You came to share my misery That You might share Your joy with me. What thanks shall I return to You? O dearest Friend of souls! My Brother! I now have in You a Helper in affliction, a Deliverer in tribulation, a Savior when my sins terrify me, an Aid in need, a Support in death. You are my Light; enlighten me! You are the Way that leads me to the Father. You are the Truth that teaches me to know that Life which gives life. You are my Righteousness; You justify and save me. You are my High Priest, who intercedes for me and blesses me. You are the Lamb sacrificed for my trespasses, the full Ransom for all my transgressions.

O precious Holy Spirit, how great is Your love in having this comfort, this joy, this salvation proclaimed to me again! From my heart I rejoice on this holy festival and say: My Jesus is mine; His heaven is mine. This Child is born for me, yes, truly for me. This Son is given for me, yes, truly for me. He has obtained and given also to me, yes to me, the grace of God, sonship with Him, and the eternal inheritance that is reserved for us in heaven.

O Jesus, whom in spirit I behold and gaze upon in the manger, how lovely, how kind You are! Grant me grace never to forget You, but to keep You ever in my heart, on my lips, and before my eyes. O my Salvation, sanctify me! I yield myself to You with all that I am and have. O my Bridegroom, embrace me. For You I will live, You I will serve, from love of You I renounce the world and all the pleasures of this life. Let my heart be Your manger and Your dwelling in time and in eternity. Enfold and keep me in Your love, that I may have rest, peace, comfort, safety and the salvation of my soul. Now that my Jesus has become man, I am not lost. Since I believe in Him, I will not perish, but have everlasting life. God is my Friend, because by faith I am in Jesus, and because Jesus is in me. I do not fear death; for in Him I have life. I do not fear the accusation of my conscience on account of my sins, for Jesus, my Advocate, is with me.

— *Starck's Prayer Book: Revised Concordia Edition*, © CPH 2009, pp. 57-58



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

## Youth Confirmation Classes

- First Year Confirmands meet for instruction on at 10 am, followed by Second Year Confirmands at 11 am.

## Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

- Sunday School and Adult Bible Class is offered **every Sunday at 11 am** for all children, adult members of Peace, and guests. We are currently using **"A New Song Unto the Lord"**.

## Together in the Word

- Our *Together in the Word* Bible Study meets on **Thursday mornings at 10 am**. All men and women of Peace who are available at that time are encouraged to join us. Guests are always welcome as well. We are currently studying the book of **Romans**.

## "Christian History 101"

- Weekly classes are held on **Wednesdays at 6 pm**. The class is studying the history of the Christian Church from the time of the apostles to today. On **January 6**, we will begin a new section in this class by turning our attention to the Reformation in the 16th century, so this would be a most excellent time for you to join us if you haven't been able to do so before.

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

### JANUARY

#### Happy Birthday to:

6 Dorothy Trgina	24 David Meyers
11 Mary Jakolat	25 Joan Burch
14 Rebekah Tennant	30 Evelyn Cummins
21 Don Reithel	

#### Happy Anniversary to:

15 Dorothy and Gary Trgina

*If we ever miss your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so that we can update our records.*

## From the Lighter Side . . .

### "The Christmas Story"

Terri asked her Sunday School class to draw pictures of their favorite Bible stories. She was puzzled by Kyle's picture, which showed four people on an airplane, so she asked him which story it was meant to represent. "The flight to Egypt," said Kyle. "I see. And that must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus," Ms. Terri said. "But who's the fourth person?"

"Oh, that's Pontius - the Pilot." 😊

## PAROCHIAL REPORT

(as of 12/29/09)

### Membership at Peace

Baptized - 143; Confirmed - 123

### Membership gains: 2

Kyle Stahl—Baptized (12/27)

Kyle & Jilian Stahl—Adult Confirmation (12/27)

### Membership losses: 0

### Financial Report

YTD Budgeted.....	\$116,215.00
YTD Receipts.....	\$105,253.81
Difference.....	\$-10,961.19

## Update from the Treasurer

Following is the proposed budget for 2010. After deliberations at multiple meetings, the Council agreed that we should propose a budget that is in line with our projected income for 2010. Of course, we cannot predict our income for certain, but, based on expected receipts for 2009 we can make an educated guess.

You will notice that some of the lines have a budgeted amount of zero. Fundraising will need to take place for any expenses in these lines. The Council is committed to staying within this budget. It will take the help and cooperation of all of us in order to make this happen.

	2009 budget	proposed 2010 budget
<u>Expense</u>		
Church and Worship : Altar & Worship	\$1,500.00	\$1,000.00
Church and Worship : Christian Ed.	\$800.00	\$800.00
Church and Worship : Evangelism	\$500.00	\$0.00
Church and Worship : Miscellaneous	\$0.00	\$0.00
Church and Worship : Music	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Church and Worship : Stewardship	\$100.00	\$0.00
Church and Worship : Youth Group	\$500.00	\$0.00
Miscellaneous		
Missions : District	\$0.00	\$0.00
Missions : Issues, etc.	\$500.00	\$500.00
Operating Expense : Admin. Asst.	\$5,200.00	\$5,200.00
Operating Expense : Advertising	\$200.00	\$0.00
Operating Expense : Building Maintenance	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Operating Expense : Insurance	\$2,800.00	\$2,000.00
Operating Expense : Janitorial	\$0.00	\$0.00
Operating Expense : Lawn/Snow Removal	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Operating Expense : Main. Supplies	\$250.00	\$0.00
Operating Expense : Miscellaneous	\$0.00	\$0.00
Operating Expense : Office Expense	\$2,400.00	\$3,000.00
Operating Expense : Telephone	\$2,000.00	\$2,100.00
Operating Expense : Utilities	\$5,500.00	\$5,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Benefit Package	\$22,000.00	\$18,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Book Allowance	\$500.00	\$500.00
Pastoral Expense : Conf. and Training	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Down Payment Loan	\$2,220.00	\$2,220.00
Pastoral Expense : Guest Pastors	\$200.00	\$200.00
Pastoral Expense : Mileage	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Salary	\$62,045.00	\$62,045.00
<u>Total Expenses</u>	\$116,215.00	\$108,565.00






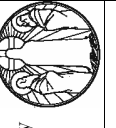




Please let me know if you have questions.

In Christ,  
Carol Zeile

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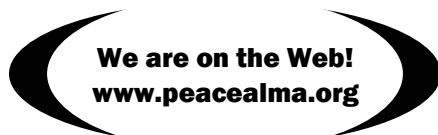
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# January 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>3 2nd Sunday after Christmas</b> 8:30—Choir <b>9:30—Divine Service</b> 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 	4 7 pm—Ladies Guild	5 <i>Pastor Messer @ Winked</i> 7 pm—Church Council	6 6 pm—"Christian History" <b>7 pm—Divine Service</b> <i>The Epiphany of Our Lord</i> 	7 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers 6:30 pm—SALT	8 10 am—1st Yr. Conf. 11 am—2nd Yr. Conf.	9 10 am—1st Yr. Conf. 11 am—2nd Yr. Conf.
<b>10 The Baptism of Our Lord</b> 8:30—Choir <b>9:30—Divine Service</b> 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 	11 1:30 pm—Lunch Bunch <i>The Main Café in Alma</i>	12 7 pm—Church Building Face Lift meeting <i>(see p. 8 for details)</i>	13 6 pm—"Christian History" <b>7 pm—Divine Service</b> <i>The Confession of St. Peter</i> 	14 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers 7 pm—Table Talk	15 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers 7 pm—Table Talk	16 <b>Stahl Baby Shower</b> <i>1 pm - 6 pm</i> <b>OOPS!</b> <b>Shower is</b> <b>Sunday, Jan 17</b>
<b>17 2nd Sunday after Epiphany</b> 8:30—Choir <b>9:30—Divine Service</b> 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 5-7 pm—PYG 	18	19	20 <i>No Class or Service</i>	21 <i>No Together in the Word</i> 5 pm—Weight Watchers	22	23
<i>Pastor and Lisa Messer away on Caribbean Cruise</i>						
<b>24 Transfiguration of Our Lord</b> 8:30—Choir <b>9:30—Divine Service</b> 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—Voters' Assembly 	<b>25</b> <i>Newsletter articles due</i> <b>12 pm—Divine Service</b> <i>The Conversion of St. Paul</i> 	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 6 pm—"Christian History" <b>7 pm—Divine Service</b> <i>Ss. Timothy and Titus, Pastors and Confessors</i> 	<b>28</b> 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers	<b>29</b> Peace Movie Night 6:30pm—Pizza 7:00 pm—Showtime <i>Movie yet to be determined—look for info coming soon.</i>	<b>30</b> 10 am—1st Yr. Conf. 11 am—2nd Yr. Conf.
<b>31 Septuagesima</b> 8:30—Choir <b>9:30—Divine Service</b> 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 	<b>February 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 6 pm—"Christian History" <b>7 pm—Divine Service</b> <i>Purification of Mary and Presentation of Our Lord</i> 	<b>4</b> 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 10 am—1st Yr. Conf. 11 am—2nd Yr. Conf.

Peace Lutheran Church  
325 E. Warwick Dr.  
Alma, MI 48801

Church: 989-463-5754  
E-mail: [contact@peacealma.org](mailto:contact@peacealma.org)  
Mary's Home: 989-463-3067  
Pastor's Home: 989-463-3093  
Pastor's Cell: 989-388-2037



*The mission of Peace Lutheran Church is to welcome all people into the fellowship of God's love by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and to nurture our members with God's Holy Word and Sacraments.*

## *Serving in January*

January	ELDER	ACOLYTES	USHERS	GREETERS
3 - 9:30 am (Christmas 2)	Miguel Ortiz	Morgan Johnson Samantha Messer	Gary Miller Jim Sager	Jon Penzien and Family
10 - 9:30 am (Baptism of our Lord)	Larry Elliott	Tyrel Harwager Aaron Messer	Jonathan Penzien Chris Brown	Sharyn Greening
17 - 9:30 am (Epiphany 2)	Terry Luplow	Natalie Penzien Sarah Messer	Bill Hendrick Daren Johnson	Jenny Baughman
24 - 9:30 am (Transfiguration)	Miguel Ortiz	Paige Harwager Melanie Penzien	Vern Jakolat Kevin Sellke	Mary Girard Yvonne Elenbaas
31 - 9:30 am (Septuagesima)	Larry Elliott	Sierra Luplow Morgan Johnson	Vern Jakolat Phillip Schafer	Miguel and Sue Ortiz
<b>February</b>				
7 - 9:30 am (Sexagesima)	Terry Luplow	Samantha Messer Myka Luplow	Gary Miller Jim Sager	Bob and Jo Wendt

*“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men” (Eph. 6:7)*