

GOOD NEWS FROM ST JOHN

February
2012

NEWS FOR ALL

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:00 am

Sunday School
9:15am—10:00am
(during the school year)

Holy Communion
1st & 4th Sunday

PASTOR

Gail Sowell

Office Hours: 9am-1pm
Tuesday-Friday

SECRETARY'S HOURS

Monday-Friday
9:00-1:00

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Items for print MUST be submitted by the 20th of the preceding month.

Pastor's Ponderings



I owe you all an apology. For the Christmas Eve service I omitted a verse from the litany based on Isaiah 9. We read about the *people walking in darkness who have seen a great light*. We read about the joy men feel *when dividing the plunder, and the shattered yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor*.

But I left out verse 5: *Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire*.

I'll tell you why. I didn't want to disrupt the sweet feelings of Christmas Eve with mention of bloody battle garments. I wanted to focus on the *great light, the joy, and the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*.

And in doing this, I did you a dis-service. I only realized this when rumors reached me that someone—or some ones—is/are unhappy when I preach something that's "not in one of the books of the Bible." Maybe when I mention my dogs, or the Packers, or a story from my own past.

The fact is, the Bible wasn't written to present a glorious God whose sole goal is to draw us up to himself out of this world. God's holy Word reveals to us our all-powerful, all-present God who became one of us, who lived a fully human life in this world of nitty-gritty war, sin, broken relationships, pain, unforgiving hearts, greed, arrogance—you name it, God lived in and experienced it.

The task of a preacher is to make the holy Word of God come alive so we can make it a part of our own lives. Jesus, our Wonderful Counselor and Prince of Peace, was born into a time and place when the poor suffered, the different were cast out, the sick and handicapped were believed to be cursed by God.



(Continued on next page.)



Mission Statement: Getting to know Jesus and making Him known through our Worship and Serving.

Pastor's Ponderings

(Cont.)



There's some horrible, grizzly, sickening stuff in the Bible. There's some horrible, grizzly, sickening stuff in our world today.

Jesus, our mighty God-in-the-flesh, one in being with our Everlasting Father, couldn't turn away from the blood-stained battle garments. He heard, waking and sleeping, the tramp of the warriors' boots, stained in the gore of war and oppression. Until we can translate that sin-sick situational living into our own time and place, we can't truly understand the gospel.

"The time has come," Jesus said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15).

What is the "good news"? God comes to us, Emmanuel (God-With-Us)! He died for us while we were sinners (Romans 5:8). He came to us in our weakness, and he continues to come to us in the communion of saints and in his holy supper.

He will come to us until our guilt is swallowed up in his grace, until our shame is dried up by his love, until our pain blossoms into wisdom. He dwells within us, through our baptism into his death, and we can't escape his love, or his presence. – Thanks be to God!

Pastor Gail

Local Stewardship



Artists wanted: Do you, or does someone you know, have the gift of drawing? We're exploring the possibility of having original pictures on bulletin covers occasionally. We can provide you with a whole year's worth of scriptures, and you can design your own scene. Talk to Pastor Gail or Rose if you're interested in this new ministry.

The Worship Committee would like to focus on stewardship by using non-disposable cups and plates. We talked about the possibility of having a "coffee mug tree" or rack or other hanging place where people can bring their own coffee cups—or where those of us who have too many can donate some! Creative Carpenters, what can you come up with?



The season of Lent is fast approaching! Ash Wednesday is February 22nd. That evening we have our first Soup Supper at 5:30, followed by worship at 6:30.

The theme of the Wednesday services this year is the "I Am" statements of Jesus from the Gospel of John: I am the light of the world; the gate and the good shepherd; the resurrection and the life; the way, the truth, and the life; the vine; the bread of life and the true bread from heaven. We go a step beyond that to the fact that we (we!) are incorporated into Jesus: "I am in my Father, and you are in me."

There's no Wednesday gathering during holy week, which begins with Palm Sunday on April 1st. Please plan to attend the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship services. Your Easter joy will be greater as you follow Jesus to his Last Supper and then to the cross!

WOMEN OF ELCA NEWS

The WELCA Bible Study group meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 1pm. The next Bible Study is Tuesday February 7.

There is NO General Meeting this month. General Meetings are every OTHER month on Tuesday afternoon at 2:15pm. The next General Meeting will is scheduled for **March 6**.

WOMEN'S UPCOMING EVENTS FOR 2012

April 14—Spring Rally, Our Savior, Holway (Medford)
July 2014—Triennial Convention, Charlotte NC
September 29—Fall Leadership Training
October 6—Fall Retreat, St. John's Edgar
December 16—Cookie Walk



HAPPY HOUR met Thursday, January 19, with 10 people braving below zero temperatures to Attend. We watched a cute (and funny) DVD "The Wistful Widow of Wagon Cap" with Abbott & Costello which everyone enjoyed! We enjoyed a delicious lunch of pancakes & sausages while listening to a CD by David Anthony Berg, a musician from Edgar. **A good time was had by all!**

Next **Happy Hour** will be Thursday, February 16, 2012 at 10am. We will enjoy a time of friendly entertainment and share a delicious potluck! JOIN US!!

Quilters of St. John

The quilters continue to faithfully meet every Tuesday morning at 9am! They would be "sew" happy to have YOU join them! Supplies of fabric, blankets, sheets etc., are always gladly received as well.



Lent is here

Oh dear oh dear oh dear. I didn't even make a new year's resolution to lose weight, and here I am ounces lighter! After all the feasting from the Christmas season, there hasn't been very much food at St. John the last few weeks. But the Soup Suppers are coming soon, and that always means all sorts of goodies!

It's hard to think that Lent could be approaching when we just put away all the Christmas decorations. But Ash Wednesday is already on February 22nd. -- Do you think Pastor Gail would make the sign of the cross on my forehead if I came up to the altar? The ashes might make me sneeze!

I'm so proud to be the official Church Mouse of St. John Lutheran ELCA in Edgar! There are so many really special people here, it's an honor to have my tail stepped on by them. I hope all of you have a great month of February!

On a personal note:

Thank you for your ongoing prayers for my little grandsons, Nathaniel and Logan. They will probably go home from the hospital (UCLA Medical Center) the beginning of March. They have typical premie problems but are growing and stabilizing.



—Pastor Gail



Reflections...From Secretary Rose

I don't know ...but I think my reflectors are growing dim. It's a new year. We've survived another Christmas season AND the annual report... it all invites a lot of reflecting. So many things to think about.

Something I've been reflecting on in my quiet times with God is *"Let us not become **weary** in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."* (Galatians 6:9)

As I was pulling together the annual report, it was plain to see that MUCH goes on here at St. John! And that's only a piece of the puzzle for those involved. There's home & family, employment, school, health care appointments, and many other things that vie for time & attention .

So how does one keep from growing weary? 2 Corinthians 9:10 says *"Now he (God) who supplies seed to the sower (us) and bread for food **will also supply and increase your store of seed** and will **enlarge the harvest** of your righteousness."* I guess when we feel like we're getting weary and running out of seed , we need to go back to our supplier. Sounds to me like **he promises to refill our sacks!**

Psalm 46:10 reminds us *"**Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.**"*

Wait! I think there's a brightening glow....

A Promise Kept!



It was the day after Christmas at a church in Kentucky.

The Pastor of a church was looking over the lawn when he noticed that the baby Jesus was missing from among the Nativity figures.

He hurried outside and saw a little boy with a red wagon, and in the wagon was the figure of the little infant Jesus.

So he walked up to the boy and said, "Well, where did you get your passenger, my fine friend?"

The little boy replied, "I got Him at church."

"And why did you take Him?"

The boy explained, "Well, about a week before Christmas I prayed to the little Lord Jesus and I told Him if He would bring me a red wagon for Christmas, I would give Him a ride around the block in it."

Too Cute !

GOOD NEWS

St. John Lutheran Church ELCA
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We're on the Web
www.stjohnelcaedgar.org

February 2012 !



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*Deadline for
March Newsletter
is February 19!*



Please remember to check your bulletin for updates. If you would like to have us e-mail the Newsletter to you, please let us know.