



# The **St. John Eagle**

*“Celebrating over 100 years, 1904 - 2007”*

*Member Congregation of the ELCA and LCMC*



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## ***St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church***

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### **From the Pastor's Pen Macintosh**

My thoughts for this edition of *The Eagle*, while not completely contained in the little poem that follows, are well expressed by it. The “poem” is one of those ubiquitous e-mails that make the rounds, but in this instance is a welcome address by an unknown writer of the season before us. It is titled, “The Month Before Christmas.”

‘Twas the month before Christmas  
When all through the land,  
Not a Christian was praying  
Nor taking a stand.

See, the PC Police had taken away  
The reason for Christmas, no one could say.  
The children were told by their schools not to sing  
About shepherds and Wise Men and angels and things

It might hurt people’s feelings, the teachers would say  
December 25th is just a “holiday.”  
Yet the shoppers were ready with cash, checks, and credit  
Pushing folks down to the floor just to get it!

CDs from Madonna, an X-Box, an I-Pod  
Something was changing, something quite odd!  
Retailers promoted Ramadan and Kwanza  
In hopes to sell books by Franken and Fonda.

As Targets were hanging their trees upside down,  
At Lowe's the word Christmas was nowhere to be found.  
At K-Mart and Staples and Penny's and Sears  
You won't hear the word Christmas; it won't touch your ears.

Inclusive, sensitive, di-ver-si-ty  
Are words that are used to intimidate me.  
Now Daschle, now Durbin, now Sharpton, Wolf Blitzen  
On Boxer, on Reed, on Kerry, on Clinton!

At the top of the Senate, there arose such a clatter  
To eliminate Jesus in all public matter.  
And we spoke not a word, as they took away our faith  
Forbidden to speak of salvation and grace.

The true Gift of Christmas was exchanged and discarded  
The reason for the season, stopped before it started.

So as you celebrate "Winter Break" under your "Dream Tree"  
Sipping your Starbucks, listen to me.  
Choose your words carefully, choose what you say  
Shout MERRY CHRISTMAS, not Happy Holiday!

For some time now I have been increasingly concerned about the direction our society is taking, away from our religious roots to an increasingly secular pursuit of things material and superficial. What I have become even more concerned about is the direction our mainline churches are taking, moving from the unashamed proclamation of the gospel and a theology that indicts us of our sin and celebrates our redemption through the grace and love of God, to an emphasis on corporate social responsibility coupled with a sentimental humanism that loses all semblance of what the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are all about.

The poem that appears above is itself superficial, but it does point to the unwelcome direction our society and the church is taking and the serious issues that we must take on as committed disciples of our Lord. As superficial as it may be, let us begin to take back our church and to take on the proclamation of the gospel in the midst of the very secularism that surrounds us. In the spirit of our calling as God's people, let us indeed begin with a bold first step, to "shout MERRY CHRISTMAS, not Happy Holiday!"

SERVING ST. JOHN WITH OUR TIME AND TALENTS –

**During December:**

**Ushers**

Carole Grayson  
Raudna Pelletier

**Lay Assistant**

12/2 Linda Phyles  
12/9 Dan Eisenberg  
12/16 Angie Cornwell  
12/23 Fred Faust  
12/24 Steve Gemma  
12/30 Sue Reed

**Custodial**

12/2 Berg/Grayson/Othote  
12/9 Gemma  
12/16 Valletti/Carson  
12/23 Dancewicz  
12/30 Reed

**Lector**

12/2 Judy Othote  
12/9 Judy Othote  
12/16 Steve Gemma  
12/23 Steve Gemma  
12/24 Fred Faust  
12/30 Fred Faust

**Childcare**

12/2 Kristin & Kira  
12/9 Chip & Shannon  
12/16 Kyle & Heather  
12/23 Rick & Cheryl  
12/30 Chip & Shannon

**Coffee Hour**

12/2 Sue & Lisa  
12/9 Linda & Becky  
12/16 Mary & Jack Plumb  
12/23 Christmas Pageant – All Members  
12/30 Shannon & Angie

**During January:**

**Ushers**

Chip Bott  
Rick Cormier

**Lay Assistant**

1/6 Linda Phyles  
1/13 Fred Faust  
1/20 Angie Cornwell  
1/27 Steve Gema

**Custodial**

1/6 Phyles  
1/13 Berg/Grayson/Othote  
1/20 Bott  
1/27 Gemma

**Lector**

1/6 Linda Phyles  
1/13 Linda Phyles  
1/20 Sue Dancewicz  
1/27 Sue Dancewicz

**Childcare**

1/6 Lydia & Heather  
1/13 Rick & Cheryl  
1/20 Kristin & Kira  
1/27 Chip & Shannon

**Coffee Hour**

1/6 Judy & Cheryl  
1/13 Raudna & Carole  
1/20 Linda & Susan  
1/27 Annual Church Meeting -  
All Members

**During February**

**Ushers**

Volunteers  
Needed

**Lay Assistant**

2/3 Sue Reed  
2/6 Linda Phyles  
2/10 Angie Cornwell  
2/17 Sue Reed  
2/24 Linda Phyles

**Custodial**

2/3 Valletti/Carson  
2/10 Dancewicz  
2/17 Reed  
2/24 Phyles

**Lector**

2/3 Phil/Sue Reed  
2/6 Phil/Sue Reed  
2/10 Tom Knowlton  
2/17 Tom Knowlton  
2/24 Judy Othote

**Childcare**

2/3 Lydia & Heather  
2/10 Rick & Cheryl  
2/17 Kristin & Kira  
2/24 Chip & Shannon

**Coffee Hour**

2/3 Mary & Burt  
2/10 Lydia  
2/17 Linda & Becky  
2/24 Pancake Breakfast

**\*\*Please ask someone to fill in for you if you are unable to make it when you are scheduled.  
Phone numbers are in the church directory.**

## ST. JOHN NEWS AND NOTES –

After discussing it at a recent Church Council meeting, we are going to try to bring some currency to the Prayer List that appears in the bulletin every Sunday. Since some of the people listed are friends or family of our members, it is not always clear what their status on the list should be. Therefore, after three months on the Prayer List names will be removed UNLESS friends or family members request that they remain on the list. This is not something that we intend to do arbitrarily, but is rather an attempt to keep the list current and appropriate.

The Peabody International Festival was held Sunday, September 9 in Peabody Square. St. John's WELCA participated in the event offering Finnish nisu and other food items. Attendance at the Festival was good and a modest amount was added to the WELCA treasury.

The volunteers who serve as teachers and other staff members of our Sunday Church School were installed into their responsible positions on Sunday, September 16. They are: Susan Danczewicz, Linda Phyles, Steve Gemma, Rick Cormier, Chip and Shannon Bott, Dan Eisenberg and Tom Knowlton.

We had a very unusual Fall Kickoff this year. The Fall Kickoff was held Saturday evening, September 15. After enjoying a delicious pot-luck supper we were entertained by the illusions of a professional magician. All who attended were astounded by the magical tricks of Bonaparte. Now, just where do you think that rabbit came from?

On September 30, we welcomed Elder William Ting, to the pulpit to deliver the message. Mr. Ting was one of the missionaries who witnessed to Chinese speaking students in eastern Germany for three months this past spring. His group was an outreach of his Chinese speaking congregation in Atlanta, Georgia, where our own Angie Cornwell's father, Elder Kenneth Wang, is an interim pastor. Following the service, Elder Ting presented a slide show consisting of pictures from his last trip to Eastern Germany and explained further the work their group performs.

This mission outreach is one of the four ministries we at St. John have chosen to support with our prayers and benevolence money. Our prayers are especially appreciated. Please continue to include all mission work in your prayers and concerns.

Thanks to all who helped with the fall clean-up both inside and outside. It was a big job which was very well done.

Thank you to Rick Cormier, Paul Westfield, Steve Gemma, and our 2006 confirmands, Heather Phyles, Celina Valetti and Erika Westfield for their part in completing the confirmation project. The back hallway is clean, bright and cheery. A job well done! Thank you to the Comeaus for their donation of the paint.

Our thanks go to Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for their grants of matching funds in support of our programs. We have received \$1,300.00 from Thrivent this year.

Our thanks go to the Conway, Cahill-Brodeur Funeral Home for their gift once again of our Lutheran liturgical calendars. We appreciate their generosity. The calendars are available on the long shelf in the undercroft.

On Reformation Sunday, we celebrated the Confirmation of Jennifer Renee Comeau, Kira Johanna Dancewicz and Corey Beth Westfield. Nurtured by the example of their homes and families, the ministry of St. John and two years of catechetical instruction they affirmed their own baptismal vows. This day was a special one for all of them. Please congratulate these newest members!

The annual Fall Fair sponsored by the WELCA group on Saturday, November 10, was again a huge success. Of course, this happened with the work, courage, stamina and fun that the volunteers had. Thanks for all who donated white elephants, baked goods, jewelry, etc. Oh, and the annual raffle for the goody basket was won by Sue Danciewicz this year.

Instead of meeting in the evening, the WELCA has decided to meet briefly after church on designated Sundays. The next meeting, December 9, we are all asked to bring homemade cookies and other festive items so that “goody bags” can be made to deliver to our sick and shut-ins.

The annual coat drive was a big success; we more than filled the large box provided for them. Also, as in past years we brought gifts for the Penobscot tribe in Maine. This was a success as well and we know that the Rev. Pat Bade is very grateful for our support.

The annual Advent workshop was held on December 2. This was a wonderful afternoon with lots of activities for all ages. It was a good opportunity during this busy season to just slow down and enjoy the fellowship and ambiance. Thank you to Susan Dancewicz and Shannon Bott for all their hard work in making this a wonderful day.

As a holiday fundraiser, St. John’s WELCA group will be selling homemade Nisu at \$6.00 /loaf. Orders can be placed via email ([bjcomeau@comcast.net](mailto:bjcomeau@comcast.net)), via phone message (978-977-4773), or in person (see Becky Comeau). Place your orders early, no later than Dec. 15, in order to beat the holiday rush!

The 2008 flower chart has been posted downstairs. Please sign up for the Sunday(s) you wish. The cost remains at \$30.00 per Sunday. If you wish, you may share the cost with another individual or family.

The Poinsettia list for this year is posted on the bulletin board in the undercroft. We invite you to place a plant or plants in the chancel for our Christmas Eve celebration. You can take them home with you after the service or leave them for distribution to our sick and shut-in. The cost is \$10.75 per plant. Please place your order by December 16 and pay Raudna Pelletier.

Please note that beginning December 2, and continuing through the advent season, we will be using Setting III of the liturgy.

Our volunteer lists need more volunteers! Please consider serving your church as lay assistant, lector, or a member of the choir. There are also other opportunities to serve as a cleaner, coffee hour host, usher and the list could go on and on! If you have any questions, suggestions or ideas in this regard, please speak with Pastor, Linda Phyles or Steve Gemma.

## REMINDER

We need to remind members and friends of the congregation to conclude the coffee hour accordingly so that classes can begin and end on time. Thank you for your consideration and understanding in this matter. Sunday Church School classes begin at 11:00a.m.

## PASTORAL ACTS

Pastor Phyles conducted the Committal Service for Helga Emilia Greenwood at Puritan Lawn Cemetery on October 19, 2007. Helga Emilia died in Chesterfield, Virginia, at the age of 102.

Pastor Phyles conducted the marriage service for John Thoralf Stacey and Catherine Innocente on November 1, 2007, at the Stage Fort Park in Gloucester. The groom is a Lutheran from Alaska and the couple are now residing in New York City.

Funeral services were conducted by Pastor Phyles for Bruno Kolhonen on November 28, 2007, at the Conway, Cahill-Brodeur Funeral Home. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Kolhonen died at age 90 in Southport, North Carolina, and was buried at Oak Grove Cemetery in Peabody.

## PLEASE RECYCLE

In an effort to do our part to help with the environment, we ask those that do not take home their weekly church bulletins to recycle them in the labeled bin located downstairs. In addition to used bulletins, any clean paper at the church should be recycled. Every little bit helps toward a greener environment.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

December 23<sup>rd</sup> is the annual Sunday School Pageant at 9:30a.m. Communion will not be celebrated at this service and there will be no Sunday Church School at 11:00a.m. We always look forward to this special event. Please plan to attend and be sure to join us downstairs for refreshments following the pageant.

Also on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, in the afternoon, please join us to go Christmas caroling. Please speak with Susan Dancewicz and watch the bulletin for more information.

The Christmas Eve service will be held at 7:30p.m. Communion will be celebrated. We look forward to special music by the Chancel Choir and our organist, Margaret Knowlton. All members and friends are invited to attend this festive worship service.

The annual meeting of the congregation is scheduled for Sunday, January 27, immediately following the 9:30a.m. worship service. Please plan to attend. All committee reports should be submitted by January 13 to be sure they will be included in the annual report.

Our annual retreat to Camp Calumet in Ossipee, New Hampshire, will be coming up in February. Our group has reserved the Staff House again this year so space is limited. It will be on first come first served basis. Please speak with Rick Cormier for more information or if you would like to attend.

*The "staff" of The St. John Eagle would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*