



# The **St. John Eagle**

*“Celebrating over 100 years, 1904 - 2008”  
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**

I came across an article recently that reflects something of what I have been thinking about church size and church growth for quite some time. I would share its main point with you in these few paragraphs because of what it might mean for us at St. John in terms of our success as a congregation.

The article is about a clearly “successful,” nondenominational megachurch in the Chicago area, the Willow Creek Community Church, which has recently completed a several-year study on the effectiveness of its programs and its philosophy of ministry. According to the results of the survey, most of what they have been doing at the church for many years has not necessarily produced committed disciples of Jesus Christ. Their ministry and programs have produced large numbers coming to the church, but not necessarily solid disciples of Christ. Consequently, one conclusion the report reaches is that the “success” of a congregation is not determined by the size of its crowds but by the transformation of lives that are touched by its outreach, which is the result of mature discipleship.

I have been thinking about our “success” at St. John in just these terms for quite some time. As we all know, St. John is a small congregation. It has been a small congregation in its early history, it is a small congregation now, and, in all likelihood, it will remain a small congregation for years to come. Understandably, especially because of our size, we tend to think of our “success” in terms of our numbers. But, like Willow Creek, I pray that we at St. John will begin to see our success not in terms of the size of our crowds but in the transformation of lives touched by our congregational ministry. This, after all, is what the church of Jesus Christ is meant to be: a company of faithful people who minister to one another and, in turn, reach out to others who—for a multitude

of their own reasons—need to hear the good news of the gospel. The Willow Creek survey points simply to disciplined and serious reading and studying of Scripture as the means to such committed discipleship. But I would add that a committed prayer life and regular and frequent attendance to worship are also needed for “success” in the church.

Socrates wrote that the unexamined life is not worth living. That is true, especially for the life of a congregation. Let me urge each of us, then, singly and then together as a group, to examine our own roles in the life of St. John, just how frequently and seriously we read our Bibles, pray our concerns for others before God, and receive the good news in Word and sacrament. It may be appropriate to ask ourselves just why we are part of the church, what we hope to gain from it, and just as importantly, what we are able to contribute to its witness and ministry. Once we begin to focus on what is true “success” in a congregation, then each of us can better focus on our own discipleship and what it means to “go and make disciples of all nations.”

Please note, if you will, that the “go” in the previous sentence is usually translated as an imperative. In the original Greek, though, it is not an imperative but a participle, which means that the sentence is better translated, not as “go! and make,” but rather “as you are going through life, make disciples.” This means, then, that our Lord’s injunction is not focused on sending missionaries to distant places because we can’t go there ourselves. Rather, our Lord’s message is clearly, “As you are going through your own life, always be witnessing and making disciples of those around you, wherever you go.”

This kind of focusing through our own disciplined Bible study and prayer and worship, and this kind of daily witnessing in our own lives constitute the kind of mature discipleship that marks the true success of any church. St. John has much to commend itself as a fellowship of committed people who are our Lord’s disciples. But no one would deny that there is always room for improvement—room for refocusing on our purposes as a congregation, room for maturing in our own personal witness during the week between Sundays, room for our own intentional increase in Scripture study, prayer, and corporate worship.

In this season that is Lent, let me urge each one of us to examine our own spiritual lives and our own roles in the life of God’s people here at St. John. When we do, I believe the question of our “success” will resolve itself. For, clearly, if we focus on numbers, we may not cultivate disciples. But if we focus on discipleship, the numbers will surely take care of themselves.

SERVING ST. JOHN WITH OUR TIME AND TALENTS –

**During March:**

**Ushers**

Ralph Comeau  
Becky Comeau

**Lay Assistant**

3/2 Angie Cornwell  
3/9 Sue Reed  
3/16 Linda Phyles  
3/23 Steve Gemma  
3/30 Angie Cornwell

**Custodial**

3/2 Berg/Grayson/Othote  
3/9 Gemma  
3/16 Valletti/Carson  
3/23 Dancewicz  
3/30 Reed

**Lector**

3/2 Judy Othote  
3/9 Linda Phyles  
3/16 Linda Phyles  
3/23 Susan Dancewicz  
3/30 Susan Dancewicz

**Childcare**

3/2 Lydia & Heather  
3/9 Rick & Cheryl  
3/16 Kristin & Kira  
3/23 Chip & Shannon  
3/30 Lydia & Heather

**Coffee Hour**

3/2 Shannon & Angie  
3/9 Judy & Cheryl  
3/16 Raudna & Carole  
3/23 Easter – All Members  
3/30 Linda & Susan

**During April:**

**Ushers**

Carole Grayson  
Judy Othote

**Lay Assistant**

4/6 Sue Reed  
4/13 Linda Phyles  
4/20 Steve Gemma  
4/27 Angie Cornwell

**Custodial**

4/6 Phyles  
4/13 Berg/Grayson/Othote  
4/20 Gemma  
4/27 Valletti/Carson

**Lector**

4/6 Phil/Sue Reed  
4/13 Phil/Sue Reed  
4/20 Tom Knowlton  
4/27 Tom Knowlton

**Childcare**

4/6 Rick & Cheryl  
4/13 Kristin & Kira  
4/20 Chip & Shannon  
4/27 Lydia & Heather

**Coffee Hour**

4/6 Mary & Burt  
4/13 Sue & Lisa  
4/20 Lydia  
4/27 Linda & Becky

**During May:**

**Ushers**

Volunteers  
Needed

**Lay Assistant**

5/4 Sue Reed  
5/11 Linda Phyles  
5/18 Steve Gemma  
5/25 Fred Faust

**Custodial**

5/4 Dancewicz  
5/11 Reed  
5/18 Phyles  
5/25 Berg/Grayson/Othote

**Lector**

5/4 Judy Othote  
5/11 Judy Othote  
5/18 Linda Phyles  
5/25 Linda Phyles

**Childcare**

5/4 Rick & Cheryl  
5/11 Kristin & Kira  
5/18 Chip & Shannon  
5/25 Lydia & Heather

**Coffee Hour**

5/4 Shannon & Angie  
5/11 Judy & Cheryl  
5/18 Raudna & Carole  
5/25 Linda & Susan

**\*\*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 –

The 2008 flower chart has been posted downstairs. Please sign up for the Sunday(s) you wish. The cost is \$35.00 per Sunday. If you wish, you may share the cost with another individual or family.

The Easter Lilies 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 Easter 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 \$11.00 per plant. Please place your order by March 9 and pay Raudna Pelletier.

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.

We began our celebration of the Advent Season on December 2 with the lighting of the first candle in the Advent Wreath. That afternoon the Annual Advent Workshop was held. Wreaths, ornaments and other crafts were made. Good fellowship combined with the arts and crafts made for a very enjoyable afternoon.

On the last Sunday in Advent our Sunday Church School presented their annual pageant describing the story of Christ's birth in their own special way. Our thanks go to Susan Dancewicz and other staff members for an excellent presentation.

Our Christmas Eve Service was held at 7:30 p.m. and was a meaningful Celebration of Christ's birth. Poinsettias at the altar only made the Sacrament much more sacred and spiritual. December 30, was celebrated with a Service of Lessons and Carols. The sermon was brought to us by Steve Gemma.

Sunday, January 27 our annual Congregational Meeting was held after an abbreviated coffee hour, with Pastor Phyles officiating. The congregation approved the 2008 budget as well as the new Church Council Member, Angie Cornwell. In addition, it was voted on and approved to change the communion schedule. We will continue to celebrate communion on the first and third Sunday from Advent through Easter. However, communion will only be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month for the Easter and Pentecost seasons.

The Annual St. John Family Retreat to Camp Calumet was February 15 –18. This year there were only 8 attendees in all. Everyone participated in the traditional activities such as tubing, broom-ball, building a snow fort, Scene it, and of course the Giant Scrabble Game. Finally, as always, the food was plentiful and superb. Reservations have been made to attend again next year. Please plan to attend.

Sunday, February 24, the Annual Pancake Breakfast was held. All who attended did not go away hungry! Thanks to all the people who made this event happen.

There were two recent deaths within the congregation recently. We extend our sympathy, prayers and condolences to Fred Faust who recently lost his brother Bill and to Tom Knowlton on the death of his mother.

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.

## 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

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 informati.

Our annual Table of the Lord Communion Service will be held on March 20, beginning at 7:30 p.m. This service is unique in its presentation and is well worthwhile attending. One portion of the Service

is devoted to hammering our nails that we received on Ash Wednesday into a wooden cross

Easter will be celebrated on March 23 this year. There will be special music by our choir and organist. Communion will be celebrated as a part of this Service. After the Service the annual Sunday School Easter Egg Hunt will be held – rain or shine. This is a special event which has been celebrated for a number of years. Our next communion service will be held on Sunday, April 6, the first Sunday of the month. There will be no communion offered again until Sunday, May 4.

The Historic 40<sup>th</sup> Walk for Hunger is Sunday, May 4. It starts on the Boston Common beginning at 7:00 a.m. Plan now to spend a festive day walking through Boston and surrounding neighborhoods while you help our hungry neighbors. More information and sign up sheets are available downstairs.

On Sunday, May 11 we shall celebrate the Day of Pentecost. The day is also Mother's Day on the secular calendar. Flowers in recognition of all mothers everywhere will be presented to all women attending the service.

We need to give thanks to Steve Gemma and Rick Cormier for all the work and time they put into fixing the wall in the ladies room. The wall looks so much better than before. Thanks again. Also Chip Bott and Phil Reed need to be thanked for keeping the church steps and sidewalks clear of snow.

Celebrating 100 years!

On Wednesday March 19<sup>th</sup> Anna C. Phyles (Pastor's mother) will be 100 years old. She has had a busy life living in and around the Baltimore area. In addition to her son, she has three granddchildren as well as three granddaughters and two great-grandchildren. Currently she is residing in a nursing home in Beverly. Congratulations !!!

## GIVING A HELPING HAND TO KENYA

In order to help Kenya out of their recent turmoil, the church council authorized a donation to Glory Christian Educational Support to help support their school, Gloria Christian Acadamey. So far they have escaped the trouble and turmoil. They need our prayers as well as the monetary funds to help keep them free from danger.

## ATTENTION SENIORS !

For those senior citizens and others who may not normally file an income tax return, please know that you must file a return this year in order to receive the economic stimulus recently signed into law. Details are posted on the bulletin board downstairs. Please make note of this requirement if it applies to you.