



# The **St. John Eagle**

*"Celebrating more than 100 years, 1904 - 2008"*

*Member Congregation of the ELCA and LCMC*



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

Ellsworth Road at King Street

Peabody, Massachusetts 01960

Church Tel: (978) 531-1731

Rev. Raymond H. Phyles Tel: (978) 531-2264

Internet: <http://www.stjohnpeabody.org>

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

When this edition of *The Eagle* reaches you, Thanksgiving will have passed and Christmas and the New Year lie ahead. Many thoughts come to mind at this time of the year, of course, thoughts that may or may not include the giving of thanks to God and the celebration of the birth of his Son. I pray that you have enjoyed a meaningful giving of thanks and that you look forward to an equally meaningful observance of our Lord's birth.

These are thoughts that are of no surprise at this time of year, especially from the pastor. Yet, I would share with you some other thoughts that are equally prompted by this time of year, but that seem to have little relevance to the season—at first. I refer here to the fact that so many people travel in this holiday season. Every November, the media remind us that the day before Thanksgiving is the busiest travel day of the year, and the trips to Grandma's house at Christmas are no less frequent, if shorter, excursions.

I'm not sure why I have been thinking about traveling this year, since I have no immediate plans to do so. Perhaps it's the fact that a number of family and friends have boarded airplanes recently and flown off to their separate destinations. Whatever the reason, I have been thinking of late about my own experiences in flying. In particular, I have been mulling over my waiting around airports prior to boarding a flight.

Perhaps you yourself have experienced some of the observations I have made in airports and remember them as I do. For one thing, if you have been fortunate to find a seat while you wait, you have no doubt watched hundreds of people walk by: old people, young people, large people, small people, people in a hurry, people taking their time (apparently), people of all races, some speaking English and others not, people smiling or even laughing, and some people who appear sad, distraught, worried, or clearly angry.

We watch people of all kinds. But no matter their diversity, I have observed that they all have something in common. They are all carrying something. They all have baggage. Whether it's a suitcase or a brief case or just a handbag, they all move through the airport carrying or pulling something. Even the smallest children have something in their hands, whether it's a toy or a sippy-cup or a precious little blanket. Everyone, it seems, has baggage.

And that's what has prompted me to think about traveling at this time of year. Because the fact that all of us carry baggage seems to be an apropos metaphor of life—especially at this time of year. I think it's fair to say that, as we face the “holidays,” we bring with us, more and more, the baggage of our own human weaknesses and disappointments, the baggage of our past failures, the baggage of our anger and jealousies, and the baggage of our struggles with temptations. So often, we can feel beaten down by life's hard and painful experiences, but no more so than during this season when we are surrounded by the commercialized “joy” of marketing and Muzak.

Clearly, our baggage—our life's painful experiences—can prevent each of us from experiencing life—and its joy—to the full. But it is just then that each of us needs to pause and remember what this season is really all about. If we can pause to recount seriously all the genuine blessings we know in this life, we can truly give thanks to God on Thanksgiving and on every other day of the year as well. And if we pause to reflect seriously on this season of preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord, then we can begin to know what his coming into our lives really means for each of us. We recall our Lord's words from the gospel of John: “I came that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

If nothing else, this means that our Lord himself has come among us to help us carry our baggage and lift our burdens so that we can know new life and a new beginning in each of our lives. If you are weighed down by the baggage of your travels through life, I urge you this season to pause, to reflect, and to come to know once again the healing and the freedom, the joy and the peace of the Prince of Peace. For with peace comes hope and with hope comes life—the full and uplifting life of faith and of service. May your Christmas and new year be truly blessed and truly fulfilling.

### **Fall Cleanup and Other Work**

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Our fall cleanup day, which had been postponed due to rain, was very successful. Thanks to Fred Faust, Frank Brickelmaier, Susan Dancewicz, Tom Knowlton, Margaret Knowlton, Jack Plumb, Kristin Phyles, Steve Gemma, Phil Reed, Rick Cormier, Linda Phyles (for the donuts and coffee), and Dan Knowlton (for hauling away the leaves and trimmings). Many hands made light work, and the big job was very well done.

We also extend a special thank you to Phil Reed, Rick Cormier, and Steve Gemma for the work that was performed on the rear downspout on the King Street side of the church. We all hope this repair will help reduce the amount of water which finds it's way into the undercroft during periods of heavy rain.

### **Budgetary Notes**

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Beginning with this edition of *The Eagle* we will start publishing an indication, as a percentage, of how our offering income compares to where we need to be for our budget to balance at the end of the year. Currently, we have income amounts that are 0.8% below our anticipated budgeted amounts. These percentages include all income received through October 31<sup>st</sup>. If you have a specific budget question, please feel free to talk to Fred Faust or Steve Gemma.

**Serving St. John with our Time and Talents**

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**During December**

**Ushers**

Chip Bott  
Shannon Bott

**Lay Assistant**

12/7 Sue Reed  
12/14 Linda Phyles  
12/21 Fred Faust  
12/24 Steve Gemma  
12/28 Angie Cornwell

**Custodial**

12/7 Reed  
12/14 Phyles  
12/21 Berg/Grayson/Othote  
12/28 Gemma

**Lector**

12/7 Fred Faust  
12/14 Fred Faust  
12/21 Phil/Sue Reed  
12/24 Phil/Sue Reed  
12/28 Tom Knowlton

**Childcare**

12/7 Chip & Shannon  
12/14 Heather Phyles  
12/21 Rick & Cheryl  
12/24 Kristin & Kira  
12/28 Chip & Shannon

**Coffee Hour**

12/7 Linda & Becky  
12/14 Mary & Jack Plumb  
12/21 Christmas Pageant – All members  
12/28 Shannon & Angie

**During January**

**Ushers**

Fred Faust  
Tom Knowlton

**Lay Assistant**

1/4 Sue Reed  
1/11 Linda Phyles  
1/18 Steve Gemma  
1/25 Angie Cornwell

**Custodial**

1/4 Valletti/Carson  
1/11 Dancewicz  
1/18 Reed  
1/25 Phyles

**Lector**

1/4 Tom Knowlton  
1/11 Judy Othote  
1/18 Judy Othote  
1/25 Linda Phyles

**Childcare**

1/4 Heather Phyles  
1/11 Rick & Cheryl  
1/18 Kristin & Kira  
1/25 Chip & Shannon

**Coffee Hour**

1/4 Carole & Raunda  
1/11 Linda & Susan  
1/18 Judy & Cheryl  
1/25 Annual Church Meeting

**During February**

**Ushers**

Karin Caves  
Tim Caves  
John Caves

**Lay Assistant**

2/1 Sue Reed  
2/8 Linda Phyles  
2/15 Steve Gemma  
2/22 Angie Cornwell  
2/25 Sue Reed

**Custodial**

2/1 Berg/Grayson/Othote  
2/8 Gemma  
2/15 Valletti/Carson  
2/22 Dancewicz

**Lector**

2/1 Linda Phyles  
2/8 Susan Dancewicz  
2/15 Susan Dancewicz  
2/22 Phil/Sue Reed  
2/25 Phil/Sue Reed

**Childcare**

2/1 Heather Phyles  
2/8 Rick & Cheryl  
2/15 Kristin & Kira  
2/22 Chip & Shannon  
2/25 Heather Phyles

**Coffee Hour**

2/1 Linda & Becky  
2/8 Lydia  
2/15 Shannon & Angie  
2/22 Pancake Breakfast

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

## **Is Your Number Up?**

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Precious moments can be lost while emergency personnel attempt to find a location in the case of an emergency when house numbers are not clearly visible or do not exist. You or your loved one could be in danger!

Massachusetts general law (Ch. 148s59) and most local ordinances require that all buildings have a street number that can be clearly seen from the road. All structures are required to have numbers facing the street. It is recommended that they be placed on the frame of the main entrance on the lock side. All numbers are required to be a minimum of 4", and should be reflective, block style, contrasting color. Numbers, not letters, should be used. Any senior citizens requiring assistance to comply with this important law should contact their local town or city hall or their local senior citizens center.

## **Haven from Hunger**

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Ever wonder what the cardboard box in the undercroft marked "Haven from Hunger" is for? Throughout the year the Haven from Hunger is in need of canned goods and non-perishable food items (pasta, baby food, etc.). We deliver the contents of this collection box to Haven when we serve our meal there. If you would like to donate food to the Haven from Hunger, please bring the food items to service with you and place them into the box.

## **St. John News and Notes**

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We ask for your prayer and concern for these members and friends of St. John:

Ellen Hepburn  
Dorothy Fender

Sylvia Moynihan  
Gary Garaputo

David Fredrickson  
George Winsor

We thank Tom Knowlton for installing the pull rope on the door leading up from the undercroft. This pull rope will make it easier to close the door without leaning over the stairs.

If you wish to contribute to relief efforts following the recent National disasters, please place your contribution in a clearly marked envelope on an offering plate. Thrivent Financial will match \$1.00 for every \$2.00 contributed.

Our volunteer lists need more volunteers! Please consider serving your church as lay assistant, lector, a cleaner, coffee hour host, usher, 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 are seeking more young people to serve as acolytes during our worship services. The role they play is important and is a form of service in the chancel. If you, or anyone you know is interested, please speak with Lisa Winsor.

The volunteers who serve as teachers and other staff members of our Sunday Church School were installed into their responsible positions on Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup>. They are Susan Dancewicz, Linda Phyles, Steve Gemma, Rick Cormier, Chip and Shannon Bott, and Tom Knowlton.

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 will be available on the long shelf in the undercroft.

The 2009 flower chart will be 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 will be 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 \$10.00 per plant. Please place your order by December 14<sup>th</sup>.

Please note that beginning November 30<sup>th</sup>, and continuing through the Advent season, we will be using Setting III of the liturgy. On Christmas Eve, and continuing through the Christmas and Epiphany seasons, we will be using Setting II of the liturgy. We will return to Setting III of the liturgy on February 25<sup>th</sup>, continuing throughout Lent.

### **Please Recycle**

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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 recycle 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.

### **Past Happenings**

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Our annual Fall Kickoff was held Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup>. After enjoying a delicious pot-luck supper we were entertained by Christopher Eastwood, a caricature artist from Montserrat College of Art. All who attended were amazed by the skill of the artist. Scanned copies of all the caricatures can be found on our website (<http://www.stjohnpeabody.org>).

We would like to give a sincere thank you to Tom Knowlton for filling in for Pastor while he was a bit under the weather. A lot of preparation goes into providing the message. Thank you for your contributions to our ministry. Your leadership is genuinely appreciated.

The annual Fall Fair sponsored by the WELCA group on Saturday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 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, and other hidden treasures.

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 November 30<sup>th</sup>. 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.

### **In Memory**

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We join with those who mourn in remembering before God and one another those who have departed this life in the sign of the faith. Ronald A. Pelletier, Sr. (father of Linda Pelletier and Ronald Pelletier, Jr.), Robert S. and Mary E. Caves (father-in-law and mother-in-law of Karin Caves), William C. Faust (brother of Fred Faust), and Richard M. Sousa (brother of Bob Sousa).

## Upcoming Events

December 21<sup>st</sup> is the annual Sunday School Pageant beginning at 9:30 a.m. Communion will not be celebrated at this service and there will be no Sunday Church School. 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 21<sup>st</sup>, in the afternoon, please join the youth group to go Christmas caroling. Please speak with Susan Dancewicz and watch the bulletin for more information.

The Christmas Eve service will be held at 7:30 p.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.

Our Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup> immediately following our worship service. Remember, all confirmed and registered members of the congregation can vote on items raised at the meeting. Please plan on attending. All committee reports should be submitted by January 11<sup>th</sup> to be sure they will be included in the annual report.

Our annual retreat to Camp Calumet in Ossipee, New Hampshire, will be February 13<sup>th</sup> through February 16<sup>th</sup>. 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.

Our Annual Pancake Breakfast will be held on Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> immediately following our worship service.

Our Ash Wednesday service will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>. The imposition of ashes will be available beginning at 7:15 p.m.

*The staff of The St. John Eagle extends everyone our wish for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*