



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

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From the Pastor's Pen Macintosh

This past summer I related in this page the bulk of an article I came across about some of the theological developments that are taking place on a national level in our various churches. At the risk of bringing to you "too much of a good thing," I would like to relate to you now another, more recent article that I feel is very pertinent to our lives as members of the church of Jesus Christ. Since most of us are not receiving denominational magazines or other in-house publications of the church and since I do not wish to bring such matters into the pulpit, this may be the only means for you to be aware of what is happening in the church nationally, even internationally.

The article was written by Betsy Carlson, editor of the Network News, a publication of the WordAlone Network, a movement within the Lutheran church that has theological sensibilities very similar to those of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. She is reporting on a recent WordAlone Theological Conference that addressed its concerns directly to you who worship regularly from your favorite pew.

"Laypersons, especially those who realize that God's mercy is the final word, are the last defense against a new gospel that is afoot in the North American churches. Changes in the day-to-day theology of mainline U.S. Protestant denominations have been subtle and just below the radar in the past twenty or more years, said speakers at this fall's WordAlone Theological Conference.

"Pastor Scott Grorud, a WordAlone Network board member, and Episcopal bishop C. FitzSimons Allison, speaking at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fridley, Minnesota, each described various ways in which this new theology, or gospel, has crept into their denomination. Grorud said, 'The crisis in Christianity today is not a minor dispute over side issues. Christians have always been fighting about something and often, with time, those disputes seem to be much ado about very little. The temptation is to dismiss this also as one more dust-up over adiaphora [a church practice that is neither commanded nor prohibited by Scripture]. We in the reform movements are often charged with "majoring in the minors.'" But in this crisis, I believe the faith that was handed down to us is hanging in the balance.'

"To Allison, it is the yeast of the Sadducees, 'yeast that is seldom seen but that is powerful.' It is self-centeredness along with the illusion of freedom of choice, which is actually freedom to sin and

brings with it bondage to sin. Grorud, meanwhile, said that to him the most compelling diagnosis came from Philip Turner, a member of the Episcopal Church and a former dean of the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale University, who distinguishes ‘official theology’ as the ‘theology of divine redemption,’ and the new day-to-day ‘working theology’ as the theology of divine acceptance.’ He said, ‘The “theology of divine acceptance” distorts the very essence of Christianity and turns it into a gospel without a cross, without Christ, and without conversion.’ But each man was optimistic that the theology of salvation, of redemption, will triumph through Christ’s cross.

“Grorud said it is common to hear laypeople confess their inability to understand Scripture and theology, leaving them to pastors and theologians. He said he sympathizes with laypersons because the issues are complicated. ‘But you who are laypeople have to understand that you are the last line of defense here,’ Grorud said. ‘You can “smell a rat” before anyone else and you must take up the challenge of preserving the faith.’”

This is a strong but critical challenge to the church at large and to lay members of the church in particular. I relate part of this article here in the hope that the people of St. John will be more alert to what has been happening for some time and will take this challenge to heart. If you wish to pursue the fuller discussion presented at the WordAlone Conference, the texts of Allison’s and Grorud’s keynote addressees can be accessed from the home page of the WordAlone Network, at www.wordalone.org.

Budgetary Notes

This is 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 12.5% below our anticipated budgeted amounts. These percentages include all income received through February 28th. While this percentage may seem high, please keep in mind we did not have service on January 11th and it is still early in the fiscal year. 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

During March

Ushers

Ralph Comeau
Becky Comeau

Lay Assistant

3/1 Linda Phyles
3/8 Angie Cornwell
3/15 Steve Gemma
3/22 Sue Reed
3/29 Linda Phyles

Custodial

3/1 Reed
3/8 Phyles
3/15 Berg/Grayson/Othote
3/22 Gemma
3/29 Dancewicz

Lector

3/1 Tom Knowlton
3/8 Tom Knowlton
3/15 Judy Othote
3/22 Judy Othote
3/29 Linda Phyles

Childcare

3/1 Rick & Cheryl
3/8 Kristin & Kira
3/15 Chip & Shannon
3/22 Heather Phyles
3/29 Rick & Cheryl

Coffee Hour

3/1 Carole & Raunda
3/8 Linda & Susan
3/15 Judy & Cheryl
3/22 Sue & Lisa
3/29 Linda & Becky

During April

Ushers

Chip Bott
Shannon Bott

Lay Assistant

4/5 Steve Gemma
4/12 Sue Reed
4/19 Angie Cornwell
4/26 Linda Phyles

Custodial

4/5 Reed
4/12 Phyles
4/19 Berg/Grayson/Othote
4/26 Gemma

Lector

4/5 Linda Phyles
4/12 Susan Dancewicz
4/19 Susan Dancewicz
4/26 Phil/Sue Reed

Childcare

4/5 Kristin & Kira
4/12 Chip & Shannon
4/19 Heather Phyles
4/26 Rick & Cheryl

Coffee Hour

4/5 Shannon & Angie
4/12 Easter Sunday – All Members
4/19 Mart & Bert
4/26 Lydia

During May

Ushers

Carole Grayson
Raudna Pelletier

Lay Assistant

5/3 Steve Gemma
5/10 Sue Reed
5/17 Angie Cornwell
5/24 Linda Phyles
5/31 Fred Faust

Custodial

5/3 Dancewicz
5/10 Reed
5/17 Phyles
5/24 Berg/Grayson/Othote
5/31 Gemma

Lector

5/3 Phil/Sue Reed
5/10 Tom Knowlton
5/17 Tom Knowlton
5/24 Judy Othote
5/31 Judy Othote

Childcare

5/3 Kristin & Kira
5/10 Chip & Shannon
5/17 Heather Phyles
5/24 Rick & Cheryl
5/31 Kristin & Kira

Coffee Hour

5/3 Sue & Lisa
5/10 Mother's Day – Men Members
5/17 Carole & Raunda
5/24 Judy & Cheryl
5/31 Linda & Susan

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?

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

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

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

Ellen Hepburn
Dorothy Fender
Bill Henderson

Sylvia Moynihan
Gary Garaputo
Roland Pelletier Jr.

David Fredrickson
Anna Snow

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.

There are still openings on the 2009 flower chart. 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 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 \$10.00 per plant. Please place your order by April 5th.

Please note that beginning February 25th, and continuing through the Lent season, we will be using Setting III of the liturgy. On Easter Sunday, and continuing through the Easter season, we will be using Setting II of the liturgy. We will return to Setting I of the liturgy for Pentecost.

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 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

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 Danciewicz 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 28th, was celebrated with a Service of Lessons and Carols. The sermon was brought to us by Steve Gemma.

Sunday, January 25th our annual Congregational Meeting was held after an abbreviated coffee hour, with Pastor Phyles officiating. The congregation approved the 2009 budget as well as new Church Council Members, Cheryl Cormier and Shannon Bott.

The Annual St. John Family Retreat to Camp Calumet was February 13th through February 16th. This year there were only 9 attendees in all. Everyone participated in the traditional activities such as tubing, broom-ball, hiking, 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.

On Sunday, February 22nd, the Annual Pancake Breakfast was held. All who attended did not go away hungry! Thanks to all the people who made this event happen.

We extend a sincere thank you to Tom Knowlton for bringing the message on Ash Wednesday as well as March 1st. A lot of preparation goes into providing the message, thank you for your contributions to our ministry. Your leadership is genuinely appreciated.

In Memory

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. Niels-Peter Reinhold Nansen (brother of Margaret Knowlton), Yvonne Kauppinen (friend of the congregation), and Anna F. Phyles (mother of Pastor Phyles).

Upcoming Events

Our annual Healing service will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18th.

WELCA will be making up goody bags (cookies) for our sick and shut-in on April 5th immediately following the coffee hour. All women of St. John's are welcome to participate. WELCA plans to deliver the goody bags Easter week.

Our annual Table of the Lord Communion service will be held on April 9th, 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 April 12th 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, May 3rd.

The next WELCA meeting has been rescheduled to April 26th due to the holidays. All women are welcome (that's why we are called WELCA).

The annual spaghetti dinner will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 2nd. The cost for the dinner will be \$6/adult, \$3/child, or \$15/family. Suggestions for activities for after dinner are welcome. Please see any WELCA member if you have an idea.

The staff of The St. John Eagle extends everyone our wish for a Happy Easter.