

Lifetogether

January 2009

Olsburg-Walsburg Lutheran Parish

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Quotable Quote: *If you want to know the size of a congregation, measure the worship attendance; if you want to know the strength of a congregation, measure the number of people in Bible study.*
- Anonymous

Next newsletter items and articles will be due January 19.

From the Desk of Your Pastoral Leaders

New Year Epiphanies

Christmas is probably one of the most powerful, holy disruptions in our lives as Christians. There is a collective synergy that draws everyone to plan, act and think differently for about a month. Some of that energy is most definitely born out of a consumer culture that has capitalized on the event of the birth of Christ. The idealist in me has to believe that part of that disruption is born out of honor for the Christ Child – God who comes to us. Our faith and belief practices place great importance on the birth of Christ – the incarnation – God taking on flesh, but it is important to remember that it is only the beginning of the story. The story of our savior heats up during the last three years of the life of Jesus with a central focus on the death and resurrection of God's Son. The thing that is curious to me during this season of Epiphany is that the birth alone was enough for the magi to take news of prophecy fulfilled to the ends of the earth. The beginning of the story of Jesus was enough for them. They didn't have the experience of the grown teacher, leader, miracle worker, healer and messiah. Why didn't they just set up camp there and celebrate the good news and wait for more of the fruits of his ministry? Why didn't they start a church right then and there? Why didn't they use all of their resources to protect the child and provide for his every worldly need? They heard the good news and then they left with

the aid of angles who warned them of Herod's plot to kill the Christ Child. Just like that, they were gone as quickly as they arrived, taking with them news of a fulfilled prophecy happening in real time. It is amazing how powerful promise and prophecy can be. This good news was enough to create unrest among the Roman leadership. Herod, who had access to large armies, grew suspicious and fearful of a baby – so fearful that they arranged to have all baby boys under the age of two years to be killed in Bethlehem. Joseph was warned in a dream of this danger so he took Mary and Jesus and fled to Egypt, again fulfilling the prophecy. This all happened thirty years before Jesus launched into his official ministry beginning with his baptism. When he finally did go public, he was rarely comfortable or safe by our standards...but he was at peace in the confidence that he lived his life according to the Father's will.

I hope what you hear in this writing is that the life and promise of Jesus Christ is mysterious, powerful and risky. I hope you hear that just as the magi took the news of promise to the ends of the earth that we too are called to go to the ends of the earth. I hope you have a sense of holy discomfort and wonder at how something so invisible can yet be so powerful. I hope you have a sense of confidence in knowing that even today angels can still show up and provide safety to those who are working to shine the light of Christ in

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Deadline for calendar and other items is the last Monday of each month.

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dark places. I hope you claim your own baptismal identity so that you might be the hands and feet of Christ in the world to another knowing with confidence that you are sent into the world to share that love with the hungry, the poor, the downtrodden and the discouraged. No one ever said it was going to be easy, but we do know that we are never alone so like Mary we say, "Let it be with me according to your word." God is not done sharing this promise. What might be your call as a disciple of the living Christ this year? What is our call as the Church this year? What is God's Word saying to you these days? My prayer for all of us is that our epiphanies might be bright in this new year full of ancient promises, holy opportunities and risky actions that give glory to God.

Epiphany

Epiphany means "manifestation." On this day we celebrate the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles – that is, to all nations. Some Christian traditions celebrate three great epiphanies on this day: the magi's adoration of the Christ child, Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River, and his first miracle, in which he changed water into wine. The word and sacraments are for us the great epiphany of God's grace and mercy. We go forth to witness to the light that shines brightly in our midst. - Sundays and Seasons

Sonja's Book Review – "The Last Lecture" by Randy Pausch

I recently finished the book 'The Last Lecture.' It was so good that I passed it on to my mom who managed to read it over our Christmas Break. The reason I like this book is because it is one of those books that helps us to live well. It doesn't really fall under the genre of spiritual reading. It is more of a "life perspective / self help" book. You can't help being pulled into the review of what is important to Randy, what values helped him to arrive at the current state of life and how all of those deeply rooted experiences and values will help him with his final battle with cancer. While it might sound like a sad book, it is really a hopeful book. Randy states himself in his final lecture that his lecture is really not so much

about dying as it is about living. This is what he said to a large audience knowing that doctors estimated that he had about six months to live. It is a great read for January when looking at a brand new year stretched out in front of us. While this book isn't so much about a faith journey, it is about living life fully and faithfully according to your values. When your values are to love God, love others and to serve the world, this book is nothing short of inspirational.

Souper Bowl of Caring: February 1, 2009

Bring your non-perishable items to worship on February 1st! Our goal is at least 209 items from each church! All donations will be given to local food banks.

The Souper Bowl of Caring began in 1990 after a youth group in South Carolina decided to turn the Super Bowl into more than just a reason to get together and have a party. Since then, the campaign has spread nationwide to churches, scout groups, and now even schools and has raised more than \$41 million for soup kitchens, food banks and other charities.

"Souper Bowl" kickoff dinner planned at Walsburg

Mark your calendar for the Outreach "Souper Bowl" Sunday kickoff dinner to be held Sunday, January 25 immediately following church. A variety of soups will be provided – you are asked to bring cans of soup for the Riley Food Pantry or cash donations will be accepted as well.

Graceways

All are welcome to meet during the first three Mondays of the month at Walsburg Lutheran Church in the Memorial Hall. On January 19 we will begin a new bible study on the book of Mark. This is a great place to jump in if you haven't participated to date.

7:00 – 8:30 PM

January 5: John 8:31-36

January 12: Romans 7:15-25a

January 19: Introduction to the Book of Mark

January birthdays and anniversaries

If you know of a member whose birthday is not listed, please contact the church office.

Birthdays

- 2 Skyler Zoeller (O)
Landry Zoeller (O)
- 3 Darnell Vargo (O)
- 5 Gavin Hargrave (W)
- 6 Gary Holt (O)
- 7 Kenneth Neilson (W)
- 8 Julie Strauss (W)
- 9 Jerry Bohnenblust (W)
Emily Nelson (W)
- 10 Dale Larson (O)

- 11 Ardeva Gibson (O)
- 16 Ethan Bohlenblust (W)
- 18 Russell Berry (W)
Lacy Peterson (W)
Chase Gibbs (O)
Mitch Adams (O)
- 25 Bailee Howland (O)
Jan Nelson (W)
- 27 Brandon Nelson (O)
- 28 Alan Nelson (W)
- 30 Bee Erickson (O)
- 31 Paulette Kulp (W)

February 1-8

- 1 Helen Wieters (W)
Dick Flohr (W)
- 2 Julie Higgins (O)
- 4 Nicholas Allen (W)
- 4 Lynn Webster (O)
- 5 Dale Larson (W)
- 5 Daniel Higgins (O)
- 6 Lynne Berry (W)
- 7 Roseanne Johnson (W)

Anniversaries:

- 7 Mike & Debbie Hagenmaier (W)
- 16 Brian & Laura Clifton (O)
- 9 Kenneth & Shawn Neilson (W)

Members in service this month

Thank you to these members for their service to the parish during January.

Walsburg

Ushers: Dale Larson, Jim Nelson, Roger Bohnenblust, Chris Deetjen

Greeters: Roger and Oneita Bohnenblust, Chris and Carol Deetjen, Alan and Alanna Peterson

Communion Ushers: Larry Bestwick, Gene Henry, Travis Hageman, Dena Haller, Christopher Deetjen

***Acolytes:** 1/4 Garrett Olson, 1/11 John Burnett; 1/18 Emily Lee; 1/25 Alyssa Kulp

***Lay Assistants:** 1/4 Larry Bestwick; 1/11 Kris Burnett; 1/18 Doug Kraemer; 1/25 Kim Nelson

Flowers for Church: Volunteers; please check with the Altar Committee.

Altar Committee: Lila Bestwick, Roseanne Johnson

Olsburg

Ushers: Mike Apley, Rich Vargo, Gregg Gibson, Woody Kasselmann

Communion Assistants: 1/4 Donica Nelson; 1/18 Jim Nelson

***Acolytes:** 1/4 Bryon Nelson; 1/11 Kyle Apley; 1/18 Jacob Nelson; 1/25 Kyle Clifton

***Lay Assistants:** 1/4 Bailee Howland; 1/11 Bill Monser; 1/18 Blake Vargo; 1/25 Brian Clifton

Altar Committee: Joyce Cantrell, Coleen Esping

***If you are unable to be present for your assignment, please find a replacement and contact the church office so the correct name will appear in the bulletin.**

Reminder: February 4th is a Parent / Youth Event at Walsburg!

This event is about connecting, worshipping, playing and signing up for camp!

Installation of Council Members

Both Olsburg and Walsburg will install council members for 2008 during worship on January 18. A special thanks goes to all out-going council members who have served faithfully during the past year. Well done good and faithful servants.

Thank you!

Thank you to the Walsburg LCW and Olsburg Lutheran Church for your Christmas Gifts. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity. Peace and blessings, Sonja, Gordy, Symone and Monique

Olsburg Annual Congregational Meeting

Olsburg Lutheran Church will hold its annual Congregational meeting January 18th. The afternoon will begin at 12:00 noon with a potluck lunch. The meeting will follow the meal at approximately 1:00 p.m. Hope to see you there!

Spiritual Direction

Spiritual direction encourages you to explore a closer relationship with God. In the midst of a busy life, many people find it difficult to notice God's action in their daily affairs. Yet, at the deepest level, all of us long for a more conscious experience of God's presence and love.

In spiritual direction, you reflect deeply on the experience of your daily life. Gradually, as you contemplate, you may begin to recognize God's presence and grace in your life. You may come to realize how God's spirit is truly with you every day and everywhere.

Spiritual direction is really not about being "directed." Rather it is very much about begin encouraged to draw closer to God. You might come to spiritual direction for a variety of reasons, including to:

- *Identify and trust your own experiences of God.*
- *Integrate spirituality into your daily life.*
- *Discern and make difficult choices.*
- *Share your hopes, struggles and losses.*
- *Develop sensitivity for justice and concern for the poor.*
- *Live the essence of your spiritual affiliation with integrity.*

The privilege and responsibility of a spiritual director is to journey with you as you deepen your relationship with God. The journey takes place in the context of confidential one-on-one or group sessions with your spiritual director.

You and your spiritual director will agree on a convenient location and time for meeting, usually once a month for an hour. Many spiritual directors request a fee or free will donation (usually around \$30).

Spiritual Directors International offers an online search engine to help you locate a spiritual director. If you don't have access to the web or would like to have more conversation about what spiritual direction involves, contact Sonja Sandquist.

Luther League 2nd Sunday in January

National Youth Gathering Parent / Youth Meeting
and Group Challenge

All participants and parents need to attend.

Sunday, January 11, 3:00 PM

Meet at the Olsburg Lutheran Church Basement

Luther League 2nd Sunday in February

Bowling at Zuckey Bowl 785-539-0371 in Manhattan

Sunday, February 8

1:00 – 3:00 PM

Cost:

Includes:

Invite your friends!

"Rhythm" Retreats for the Synodical Leaders

During the upcoming months, leaders from the Central States Synod will have the opportunity to participate in a retreat focused on igniting spiritual renewal in leaders and churches. Please hold the bishop's staff and Sonja in your prayers as they work to empower leaders all over the Central States Synod:

January 21-22: Jefferson City, Missouri

February 3-4: St. Louis, Missouri

February 10-11: Parkville, Missouri

March 24-25: Wichita, Kansas

April 22-23: Great bend, Kansas

Celebration of the Ordination of Amanda Esping

Banner Creation Team Gathering

The banner team will develop a banner that will be used at Amanda's graduation at Wartburg and could be used at her ordination. It provides a constant reminder of both the mission of the church and a reminder of the support offered by her home church as she is launched into ministry throughout the world.

Area 4 Gathering Participants Needed!

Each congregation will need to send more than three people (plus pastors) to the annual event with the bishop and staff. New and exciting directions are on the horizon. Contact Sonja if you are interested in attending.

Gathering with the Bishop

Location: First Lutheran in Manhattan

Sunday, February 4

3:00 – 6:00 PM

Confirmation

Meeting Location for the month:

Olsburg Lutheran Church

Confirmation resumes on January 7th

January 7: The Wilderness Temptations

January 14: Losing the Lip Service and Getting Real
with Service Work

January 21: Jesus Calls the First Disciples

January 28: Feeding of the 5,000

Life *together*

Olsburg-Walsburg Lutheran Parish

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