

# Life *together*

Olsburg-Walsburg Lutheran Parish

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## **From the Desk of Your Pastor**

**Advent 1** (December 1, 2013) begins a new church year, and with this new beginning, we begin "lectionary cycle A" which has as a central focus the Gospel of Matthew. The Gospel of Matthew was at one time thought to be the first Gospel to be written (though we now know the first Gospel written to be Mark), and Matthew holds the place as the first (in order) of the four Gospels.

Matthew has intense antagonism between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees. In Matthew, the leaders are opposed to Jesus from beginning to end, and Matthew may have the highest level of ongoing tension between those that are "in" and those that are not...

There is much good news in Matthew. From the beginning, Jesus is also identified with the promised Immanuel. "God with us" will be a clear emphasis throughout the Gospel, and ends with the words "I am with you always, to the end of the age."

This gospel is the only one in which the word for "church" is used, and the call to action as communities of faith (and as individuals) is very strong throughout the book.

As we begin this church year, beginning with Advent 1 (Dec. 1), why not take a little time before all the Christmas parties and family celebrations, to read through the entire Gospel of Matthew. There really is no better way to get a larger picture view than to read a complete Gospel (maybe even in one sitting...)

Let us respond with glory and praise to God as we lend witness to his abundant, and abiding grace!  
Gordy

### **Olsburg 2014 Yearbook**

#### **Deadline**

All information for the Olsburg yearbook needs to be turned into Shelly no later than **December 1, 2013**.

### **Walsburg 2014 Yearbook**

#### **Deadline**

All information for the Walsburg yearbook needs to be turned into Rita Nelson no later than **December 8, 2013**.

### **Christmas Boxes at Walsburg**

The Walsburg Fellowship & Outreach Committee will be sponsoring Christmas boxes for our college students and military. Please add any names/addresses to the list posted on the bulletin board by December 1. The boxes will be assembled on **Sunday, December 8** before church. Everyone is asked to contribute bags of homemade cookies, candies, snack items and/or money to help with this project. Your assistance is very much appreciated!

### **Ronald McDonald House Collections**

It's that time of year again! I am collecting pop tabs, new children's clothes, lotions, toys, and books for the Ronald McDonald house! They like to have a wide selection around Christmas time. Any donations; big or little helps! If you have any questions or donations feel free to call Sandy or Emma Glessner at 785-532-8409. Thank you in advance! Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

### **BIBLE STUDY SCHEDULE**

**Walsburg** – Dec. 16 – “Celebration of Disciple” -- #3, prayer  
Jan. 6 – Chapter 4, the fast

**Olsburg** -- Dec. 9 – we will take a look at the rest of the Advent readings for the year.  
Jan. 13 – An overview of Matthew and the upcoming lessons.

If you haven't participated yet, it's OK to jump in at any time and be a part of the learning and conversation.

### **Walsburg accepting Pasture Bids**

Bids for the Pasture: The Walsburg Church pasture lease is up this year and open for a new bid for the years of 2014-2018. The terms of the lease will be as follows: the lease will be for the years 2014-2018, and the spraying, fence repair and optional burning will be done by the new leaser. The lease will also state that the pasture limit will be 8 head fall cows with no calves going to grass or 6 spring cow/calf pairs during the six month summer grazing season. Questions can be directed to Gary Hargrave or Vern Bulk. Sealed bids will need to be returned by the next board meeting December 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Walsburg accepting Scholarship forms**

The Walsburg Scholarship Forms are available at the church for students who are members of Walsburg Lutheran Church and are enrolled in post-secondary education. Return forms to Roseanne Johnson by December 15, 2013.

### **Opportunity to purchase Poinsettias for Walsburg Members**

If you wish to purchase a Poinsettia for the purpose of decorating the church, please call Roseanne at 293-4429 by December 1 to order. They will be \$16.00 and available for pick-up after church service on Christmas morning.

### **Olsburg Sunday School and Outreach and Fellowship Committee collecting Non-Perishable Food Items**

You are invited to bring non-perishable food items to Olsburg Lutheran Church during December. The Sunday School and Outreach and Fellowship Committee will collect the items and deliver them to a local food pantry. Thank you for helping with this cause!

# *December birthdays and anniversaries*

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

## **December Birthdays**

- 2 Loren Oman (W)
- 3 Willa Erickson (O)  
Blake Fronce (O)
- 6 Carol Deetjen (W)
- 10 Carla Hageman (W)
- 11 Beverly Sundgren (W)  
Rita Nelson (W)  
Alyssa Kulp (W)
- 15 Loree Allen (W)
- 17 Vern Bulk (W)  
LaRae Kraemer (W)
- 18 Kylie Grater (W)
- 20 Brian Monser (O)  
Garrett Olson (W)
- 22 Tom Nelson (O)  
Brandon Rogge (W)
- 26 Heather Nelson (O)  
Mildred Nelson (W)
- 28 Rick Johnson (O)  
Kent Nelson (O)
- 29 Jerome Flohr (W)

## **December Anniversaries:**

- 2 Loren and Lorraine Oman
- 3 James and Janice Nelson (W)
- 11 Dennis and Donise Peterson (W)
- 24 Chris and Carol Deetjen (W)
- 25 Rich and Darnell Vargo (O)
- 30 Steve and Julie Strauss (W)

## **January 1-8 Birthdays**

- 3 Darnell Vargo (O)
- 5 Gavin Hargrave (W)
- 6 Gary Holt (O)
- 7 Kenneth Neilson (W)
- 8 Julie Strauss (W)

## **Members in service**

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

### **Walsburg**

**December Greeters and Ushers:** Jerome Flohr, Jenny and Cassie Miller, Kermit and Jessie Sundgren, Linda Toomire

**December Communion Ushers:** Norman Johnson, Lynne Berry

**\*Lay Assistants:** 12/1 Jamie Hageman; 12/8 Jan Neilson; 12/15 Diana Hargrave; 12/22 Mary Kay Henry; 12/25 Dennis Peterson; 12/29 Linda Toomire

Thank you for warmly welcoming us as members of Walsburg!

Lee and Roberta Hartford  
Harold and Sheri Storer

**\*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.**

### **Olsburg**

**December Ushers:** Jim Nelson, Shane Adams, Brian Clifton, Tom Nelson

**December Communion Assistants:** 12/1 Becky Avery; 12/15 Laura Clifton; 12/24 (7 PM) Kirby Burklund; (11 PM) Ashley Cooper

**\*Lay Assistants:** 12/1 Kathy Monser; 12/8 Kristi Fronce; 12/22 Patty Nelson; 12/24 Susan Adams; 12/29 Becky Avery

**December Altar Committee:** April Brenner, Shelly Burklund

## **Philippine Typhoon Update...**

CHICAGO (ELCA) -- In a "remarkable act of accompaniment," the Lutheran Church in Malaysia sent \$10,000 to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to help meet the needs of survivors of Typhoon Haiyan, which struck the Philippines Nov. 8.

"This is an extraordinary and remarkable act of accompaniment. It is a privilege for the ELCA to count on the support of its companions," said the Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla, ELCA executive director for global mission. "We are being church together for the sake of the world, particularly the Philippines as they try to recover from this natural disaster."

The ELCA and Lutheran Church in Malaysia are members of The Lutheran World Federation, a global communion of 142 member churches. The ELCA is the communion's only member church from the United States.

"It is this togetherness in mission that brings us together as we embrace our respective church's gifts and engagements in mission," said Franklin Ishida, ELCA area program director for Asia-Pacific.

"Our accompaniment with the Lutheran Church in Malaysia runs deep," said Ishida. The Lutheran Church in Malaysia contributed funds to the ELCA in 2008 to help survivors of an earthquake in Sichuan, China, and in 2011 to support earthquake and tsunami recovery efforts in Japan.

The Lutheran Church in Malaysia's recent gift to support relief efforts "in the Philippines is an expression of [that church's] profound concern in the midst of tragedy and its commitment to accompanying the ELCA by utilizing Lutheran Disaster Response in channeling these disaster relief funds," said Ishida.

Through Lutheran Disaster Response, ELCA members gave \$1 million to Lutheran World Relief for the distribution of cooking utensils, shelter repair kits and debris removal in typhoon-affected communities. Lutheran Disaster Response International is also providing assistance to the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, an ELCA companion. This

response is being coordinated with The Lutheran World Federation.

Financial gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response will be used 100 percent to support relief efforts for survivors of the typhoon. Information about Lutheran Disaster Response is available at [www.ELCA.org/typhoon](http://www.ELCA.org/typhoon).

## **Hunger in the United States**

For many families, November means sitting around a table filled with the abundance of the fall harvest. But for the 48 million Americans (including 16.2 million children) who struggle with food insecurity, November, like the rest of the year, is about worrying where their next meal will come from.

ELCA World Hunger works not only globally, but also locally, to help those in need. Through partnerships with ELCA congregations and organizations, ELCA World Hunger supports soup kitchens, food pantries, homeless shelters and other ministries to people around the country that assist them in getting back on their feet.

Learn more about how your gifts are at work in the United States by visiting [www.ELCA.org/domestichunger](http://www.ELCA.org/domestichunger).

## **Caring for the World's Refugees**

Kakuma refugee camp in northwestern Kenya is home to about 100,000 refugees, all of whom have been forced from their homes in neighboring areas because of armed violence or natural disasters. It's a place filled with struggles; but it's also full of hope.

The camp is managed by the Lutheran World Federation and supported by your gifts to your church, the ELCA and ELCA World Hunger. Together, the doors of over 20 schools have been opened and advanced at Kakuma, providing basic education and meals to 15,000 school children every day.

More importantly, though, the programs at Kakuma bring hope for a brighter future. "What I want in my life is just to live with my family in

peace in a secure place,” says Diadem, a young woman who has been living in Kakuma after being displaced from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. “I know that I’m secure, and I’ll know that no matter what, I’ll just live happily.” Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger help make this work possible – providing opportunities to many who would otherwise be uncertain about where they would get their next meal or where they would sleep at night.

Gifts to ELCA World Hunger support innovative solutions that fight hunger and poverty in nearly 50 countries around the world, including the United States. Your gifts above and beyond the offerings you regularly make to your congregation make a life giving difference.

### **Time to Decorate the Churches Olsburg –**

**Walsburg –** December 1<sup>st</sup>, immediately following worship, we will gather for a meal and get all the trimmings out for the tree, balcony, window wells etc. Meat (sloppy joe sandwiches) will be provided. Bring chips, salad, desert, relish, etc. to share. Questions? Call Roseanne Johnson.

Tickets for Olsburg Lutheran Church’s 57<sup>th</sup> annual Swedish Supper on December 7, are \$15.00 for adults and \$7.00 for children 6-12 years. Tickets available at Union State Bank in Olsburg and Randolph, Loberg Grocery in Olsburg or contact Woody or Luellen Kasselmann at woodyk@twinvalley.net or 785-468-3682 or cell 785-565-1240

Bakery Items are needed for the annual bake sale during the Swedish Supper, Dec 7 (Saturday). All Items can be left at the church (Walsburg or Olsburg) by 3:30 that day, or brought to the grade school in Olsburg early in the evening. If you have a "Swedish" or heritage specialty from your family’s history, these are especially sought after. ALL cookies, breads, sweets and baked goods are appreciated.

Thanks for lending your support to *Life Together* the youth as we begin to look at funding for the next youth gathering for 2015 in Detroit, MI.

### **OLSBURG CEMETERY FUND-RAISER**

We have a continuous fund-raising opportunity available through Dillons; And the funds raised through this program will go toward the OLSBURG CEMETERY Fund.

Here’s how it works: You purchase a Dillon’s gift card for \$5.00, which has \$5.00 already credit on it. This is a RELOADABLE gift card. And ONLY this card is connected to the fund-raiser. It probably looks like other Dillon’s gift cards, but this one is programmed/scanned to our fund-raiser. So DON’T throw it away, just continue to RELOAD money on it and use it for all your shopping at Dillon’s. You may pay for your reloaded card with cash, check, or major credit card. So if you do any shopping at Dillon’s it would greatly benefit the OLSBURG CEMETERY Fund if you would purchase one of these and use it each and every time you shop at Dillon’s. You may need to get more than one if you have others in your family that do your shopping there as well.

You can use it for groceries AND at the gas pumps.

You have to remember that you have to reload your card at the register before your purchases are scanned ... or already have money on the card before you want to use it.

If you use a Dillon’s plus card, you still need to present /or use that for your points or sale items.

### **HOW THIS HELPS THE OLSBURG CEMETERY FUND:**

When we reach \$5,000 or more in reloads, within Dillon’s four-week cycles, we will receive a rebate check for 5% of the total amount. If we don’t reach \$5,000 in a cycle, our funds will carry over into the next cycle. ex.: \$5,000 would equal \$250.

The church will receive the check which goes into the OLSBURG CEMETERY Fund since the church is responsible for all maintenance of the cemetery.

If you know of anyone who wants to help out this worthy cause since it’s actually a community need/cause, please let them know how to get their card as well.

Since this was started last year, we have received around \$2,695.00 for the Olsburg Cemetery Fund.

The gift cards are GREAT stocking stuffers! Contact Mary Nelson, 785-776-7347 or Tami Howland at Union State Bank (785-468-3341) to get your card(s) . THANKS!

## Why Wait?

Are you thinking about New Year's resolutions yet?

Olsburg Lutheran Church Council has approved the use of Fellowship Hall for an exercise class being offered, FREE of charge to the Olsburg and surrounding communities! Jodee Webster will lead the group on Tuesday evenings beginning at 7 PM. Classes will run close to 45 minutes. Get a jump start on that resolution to get fit and join in. Classes for December are scheduled for Dec. 3, 10th and 17th.

## Olsburg Sunday School Christmas Program

Sunday December 15 at 9 AM (regular worship time) the Olsburg Sunday School Children will present their Christmas Program. All are welcome!

## Be the sign

Blogs



### By Delmer Chilton

In our Gospel lesson we read, "But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." That day? What day? When is that day? What's going to happen then?

Several years ago on Thanksgiving weekend my father told me about an incident late in World War II when his company spent a night in an abandoned

village in Germany. The squad had bedded down in a large, two-story house. The officer had posted guards in the doorways. About 3 a.m. the guard at the front door walked away from his post, down a central hall to the back to get a light from Daddy, who was the other guard. Just as he reached the kitchen, a shell exploded in the doorway where he had been standing five seconds before. Only five seconds between life and death. Truth be told, the question we face is not, "When will Jesus come back?" The question is, "How does the fact that none of us lives forever change our behavior?" The Scriptures continually remind us that one day God shall, as Isaiah puts it — "... judge between nations and shall arbitrate for many people." In light of which we are reminded by Paul that "... it is now the moment for [us] to wake from sleep" and "put on the armor of light" and "the Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus reminds us that "about that day and hour no one knows," so we must "keep awake therefore" because "you do not know on what day your Lord is coming," and "the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

In short, on this First Sunday in Advent, we are called upon to take our God and ourselves seriously. We are called upon to recognize that life can be snuffed out in an instant and to live accordingly. We are to stay awake, to watch out for signs of God's activity in the world.

This is a difficult thing to do in the midst of modern, secular, consumerist Christmas. After 2,000 years, we've sort of stopped looking for Christ to come, and we've settled for a pale, weak, neon-lit imitation. We schedule office Christmas parties and celebrate family dinners. We buy presents for our husbands and wives and children and significant others. We decorate our homes with lights and trees

and ornaments. We send out holiday greeting cards to people all over the country, and we hope that our sanity and our bank account will hold out until New Year's Day. The church's plea during Advent is that in the midst of all the "holiday hoopla" we will remember to look for Christ, to seek signs of his coming, to be alert for his presence "in, with and under" all the giving of gifts and decorating and partying.

Sometimes in the midst of our very modern, secular, materialistic world, it's hard to find signs of life in an old faith. Sometimes it feels like God is either dead or sleeping. This is not a new problem.

Isaiah preached for 40 years to a people who mostly ignored him. He preached in a world full of war, economic uncertainty and political upheaval. He continually balanced his prophecies of destruction with promises of hope, but the people ignored him because the promises of hope were so seldom fulfilled.

Many of us have for many years held onto a vision of a hopeful future, a future in which no children starve or fall victim to curable diseases, a future in which people lay aside their differences to worship a common God at a common altar, a future in which peace reigns, where military budgets are empty and schools and hospitals are fully funded, which is what I believe swords being beat into plowshares and spears into pruning forks really means. And yet we wait, and we wait, and we seek to stay awake, and we seek to trust and hope and believe that God is coming; God is really coming. And we continue to look for signs that God is just around the corner.

Let me suggest that, instead of looking for signs of Christ's coming, our more important invitation is to be a sign of Christ's coming: in our families, in our communities, in our world. I am inviting us to a season of active waiting, of busy

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anticipation, of involved preparation, of participatory readiness.

As we enter this season of Advent, I invite each of us to not only see the signs, but also to be the signs.

**1.** Take five minutes every morning and make a Christmas list. Not a list of things to buy, or things to do, or things you want but a list of blessings in your life, a list of people you love and who love you in spite of yourself, a list of the signs of God's presence in your life. After you've made your list, pray a prayer of thanks for each *thing on the list*

**2.** *Take another 10 minutes and read a chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. There are 24 days until Christmas and 28 chapters in Matthew, so you should be able to finish it. By Christmas morning, we will be reminded of why Jesus came and of what he did for us. By Christmas morning, we will be ready to celebrate with thankfulness and praise the coming of the Messiah, Emmanuel, God with us.*

**3.** *Pick out five names from your Christmas card list. Pick out five people that you have almost lost touch with, five people you seldom see or speak to. Call them up or write them a personal letter or send them an email and tell them how much they mean to you and why. Thank them for being a sign of God's presence and love in your life.*

**4.** *Perform a totally new act of charity this year. Reach out and surprise someone with the unexpected love of God. Give a part of yourself to someone in gratitude for the fact that Christ gave himself for you.*

**5.** *And finally, spend the last five minutes of every day asking God to come into your life in a fresh, new, unpredictable way this year.*



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### **Worship Schedule**

Olsburg Lutheran Church	Sundays	9:00 AM
Walsburg Lutheran Church	Sundays	11:00 AM

### **Christmas Worship Opportunities**

#### **Christmas Eve Worship**

Olsburg Lutheran

7:00 PM & 11:00 PM

Carols, Communion & Candle Light at both services. Children's message at 7:00.

Remember to invite your family, friends and neighbors.

#### **Julotta worship**

Walsburg Lutheran

**6:00 AM – Please note the time change**

Carols and candle light.

Remember to invite your family, friends and neighbors.