



Lutheran Church

News from Gethsemane Ev. Lutheran Church, 4040 N. 108th Street, Omaha, NE 68164
December 2011 edition

FAITH IS GOD'S GIFT

This devotion is the tenth in a series of devotions based on the three articles of the Apostles' Creed. This month we begin our look at the Third Article and God the Holy Spirit who brought us to faith in Jesus

Ephesians 2:8-9 - "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

December means Christmas and to many people Christmas means presents. What will we get the children this year? What will I get her this year? What about my co-workers? What about my parents? Sometimes it's difficult to find just the right gift for just the right person. We can hardly go wrong with practical gifts. How can someone not like receiving something that he really needs?

Certainly as Christmas gets ever closer with each passing day, we all anticipate the wonderful gift of a tiny baby wrapped in strips of cloth. Practical? Needed? God's gift of a Savior from sin couldn't have been more practical. A Substitute in life and in death couldn't have been more needed. But this wonderful gift of God - his own Son in human flesh born to be our Savior - would do us no good and would mean absolutely nothing if we hadn't also received a gift from the Holy Spirit, namely, his gift of faith.

That we believe in Jesus Christ and that we trust in him as our Savior is a miracle, something that only God himself could have made happen. Luther put it this way, "I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him." Since Adam's fall into sin, all people (you & I) were born in sin. We were blind, dead enemies of God. We couldn't even lift so much as a little finger to move toward believing in Jesus. How true Paul's words are to the Corinthians! "No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."

Our faith in Jesus, from beginning to end, is a gift, a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity whom we confess in the Third Article. Without his gift of faith and without his faithful and continued working through Word and Sacrament, God's gift of a Savior would mean nothing. It is only through the Holy Spirit's gift of faith that we receive the Father's

Holiday worship schedule:

Christmas Eve: 5 & 7 p.m.

Christmas Day: 9 a.m.

New Year's Eve: 5:30 p.m.

New Year's Day: 9 a.m.

gifts of righteousness, forgiveness and eternal life in Jesus. What a gift it is that we can say with Luther, "The Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith!" Opportunities abound in worship this month for the Holy Spirit to strengthen and fine tune this gift of faith that he has planted in our hearts. See you there!

School News

Friends,

What is the fate of your family's church newsletter? Is it picked up the first weekend it is available or the second or even during the current month? Does it get left in the car for a few days? Is it buried under mail or other table/counter clutter? Is it relegated to the pile of newspapers that weren't read or does it possibly end up in the bathroom for reading later?

I suppose all of us would say that one (or all) of these statements is true and has been done with our newsletters at one time or another. And if we answer the ones of neglect, that's too bad, really. You see, the unread newsletter tells the story of a congregation that operates with the living, active, and powerful Word of God. That newsletter speaks of a living and active congregation using the power of God to do ministry in so many ways, shapes, and forms. Is there more work to be done? Absolutely. Are there new and better ways to reach out with the Gospel that we haven't thought of, used, or tried? Sure. Can we improve our personal efforts to make the Great Commission our life's number one priority? You know the answer. Maybe those questions and answers don't paint us in the best light, but keeping those questions and answers in mind will help us continue to work and improve our personal and congregational ministries. Again, a look at the newsletter reveals this to us.

More recently I have heard and seen much being done to remind this congregation of all that God is doing among his saints at Gethsemane. Things that need work are being mentioned, but more importantly, items big and small that are contributing to the mission of this congregation are being highlighted to build a sense of ownership, community, and the need to keep doing what we are doing, do more, and do it all better.

I am sure thankful for that this week.

Mr. Pederson

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Parents of elementary-age students should have received an email from Pastor about the upcoming Christmas service schedule. Please note this times of practices. Work will be done in Sunday School and school to make the necessary preparations of our December 18th services.

7-8th graders will have specific narrations. These should all be assigned and distributed by Thanksgiving weekend.

Look for information through the school on our basketball season. We are combining our athletes with Good Shepherd's kids to form four teams in the Parochial Athletic League. It's the Falcons and the Bulldogs, so we are considering the Fal-dogs or the Bull-cons (pronounced Bull-kins). We may play a game in your neighborhood. Let me know if you would like a copy of our schedule.

Keep an eye out for our school's name for winter closings. We enjoy any weather-related days off and a little free publicity on the networks.

We look forward to the Advent season and all of our preparations for Christmas. With joy we can say, "Christ the Savior is born!"

Mr. P

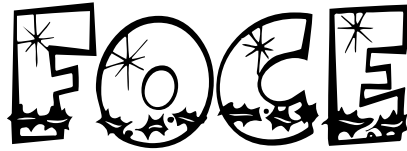
Our Family Labels for Learning

You've probably seen a little brown box on the trophy case at school. It says "Labels for Learning." It's a new program for fundraising at our school. We get 5 cents per UPC symbol from Our Family brand products.

The label can be from anything bearing the Our Family name. It's not limited to any kinds of products. As long as there's a UPC symbol, we can use it. Sometimes they also do promotions where a "catalina" prints out with extra points. We can accept those, too.

Our Family is the store brand at No Frills and Bag N Save. There are also printable coupons at www.ourfamilyfoods.com if you want to get savings on top of the store brand price.

5 cents per UPC symbol doesn't sound like much, but it adds up quickly. Thank you for your help in raising money for our school.



We hope everyone had a Happy Thanksgiving! We truly have much to be thankful for at Gethsemane Church and School as God continues to allow us to grow and flourish.

It is hard to believe we are mid-way through the second quarter of school with Christmas right around the corner. FOCE will be hosting the first Advent dinner and has a sign-up sheet posted for food donations and help with serving and clean-up.

FOCE will also provide snacks between the Children's Christmas services on December 18th. We will ask for any needed donations as the date gets closer.

The GLS children will go caroling on December 6th at local nursing homes and visit some of our own members. FOCE will sponsor buses for transportation. FOCE will also subsidize the annual bowling party for the kids prior to Christmas break.

Hy-Vee continues their 2011-2012 school year contest for another Smart Board. Details are posted in the school hallways on how to contribute if desired. The Smart Boards Gethsemane School has won over the last two years are being put to good use, and we are in a good position again this year. Thank you to those who have contributed.

We would like to help organize the 2nd Annual GLS Science/Art Fair in the spring. Please direct any feedback to the teachers or Mrs. Tibbels regarding last year's Science Fair and anything we can do to improve the event this year. Your input is appreciated!

Looking ahead, our fellowship event for January will be a Bingo night on January 20th at 6:30 p.m. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 6th at 7 p.m.

Finally, please consider your time, talents, and interest in becoming an FOCE officer in 2012. All the current officers will be completing their two year terms at the end of the school year and all the positions will be open. New faces and ideas are always welcome!

Loretta T, Secretary



On November 13th, the OWLS had a Thanksgiving Dinner serving 18 members and 21 guests. We had great entertainment of four men singing: two teachers from Good Shepherd (Joel L. and Jeff L.), Pastor E. and Vicar B. (from Gethsemane). We were pleased with their singing. We had lots of great food and a good time together.

Our December meeting will be held at Gethsemane on the 11th at 2 P.M. Our members will bring Christmas goodies to eat for our refreshments. Pastor Schell will be giving a presentation on the annual OWLS Convention that was in October. Any members who are 55 or older may join us.

Nadene S, Secretary

WINGS

Thanks to all the ladies who joined us for our last meeting. Also, thanks to all who donated items for the NELHS care packages.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 3 through Sunday, December 11 for the silent auction. We will set up at 10 a.m. on Saturday, December 3. Please bring your items to church on or before that day. Some of the ideas for our silent auction funds are to help fund curtains or Roman shades for the windows in the fellowship hall, or wooden high chairs. Let us know if there are any other ideas out to be discussed.

The WINGS will host the Advent meal on Wednesday, December 7 at 6 p.m. The menu will be a soup bar, bread, salad and dessert.

Sue H, President

Advent by Candlelight



- December 11th is approaching fast! I would like to thank those who have volunteered to help. There are still one or two tables available for hosting. If you are interested, please let me know or sign up in the fellowship hall.
- Sign up sheets are now available for bringing a dessert and attending the event. This year Advent by Candlelight is open to the women of our congregation as well as grade school age girls. Also, you are more than welcome (and encouraged) to bring a friend! If you are planning on attending, please sign up by Sunday, December 4th. We would like an approximate head count for preparations. However, if you forget, you are more than welcome to come!
- For those women and girls who volunteered to read, sing or play music, we will be having a quick practice on **Saturday December 10th at 1:15 p.m.** This is immediately after Christmas 4 Kids. If you can't make it let me know. I will make sure you have a program and are aware of your part for Sunday.

WINGS Book Club

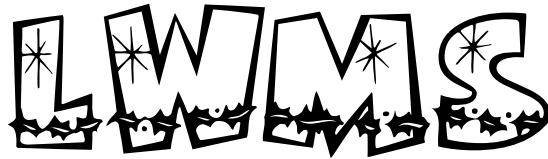
Just a quick note to thank everyone who has hosted the Book Club so far this fall. We've had some interesting reads so far!

We would like everyone to enjoy the Christmas holidays with family and friends, so we won't be meet again until January. Sue Hodges (10632 Fowler) will host us on Tuesday, January 31st.

We have selected the next three books since we have a good chunk of time before we meet again. Heaven is for Real: A Little Boy's Astounding Story of His Trip to Heaven and Back by Todd Burpo and Lynn Vincent; Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption by Laura Hillenbrand; Tallgrass by Sandra Dallas are the three books we'll be discussing - in the order listed here.

Any and all women interested in joining us for fellowship, lively discussion and perhaps a few sips of wine - mark your calendars for 2012. We typically meet on the last Tuesday of each month.

Becky & Carrie



(Lutheran Women's Missionary Society)

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."
-Luke 2:11

The Befriend a Mission display board will be at our church in January and February. Our Befriend a Missionaries are listed below. As a congregation, we will be putting together gifts to give to them. An example of gifts could be: gift cards, a subscription to a magazine, Netflix subscription, gifts of money, etc. Look for more information on this, and the board in the narthex in the new year!

Our 2011-2013 Befriend a Missionaries:

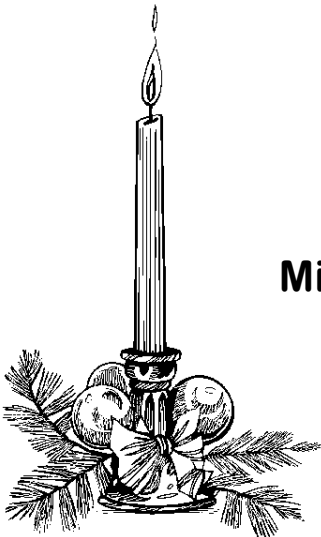
- World Missionary-- Pastor Peter Martin, Malawi, Africa
- Home Missionary-- Pastor James Fleming, Farmington, New Mexico

Save the date! The 49th Annual LWMS Convention will be held in Winston-Salem, NC on June 21-24, 2012. The theme is, "Our God Reigns!" Go to www.lwms.org for more convention details.

December Prayer Requests

- The work being done on the Apache Reservation
- Home and World Missionaries during the Christmas Season
- Our Befriend a Missionaries

*Leslie B
Reporter*



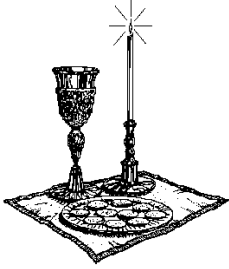
"Come Along This Advent"

*As we travel to Nazareth!
And as we visit the Temple!
And as we walk along the Jordan River!*

Mid-Week Worship begins at 7 p.m. on:
November 30
December 7
December 14

Stewardship

Altar Care



Can you spare 1 hour a week for a month or two to help with preparing our altar for services? If so, please pick a month and sign your name on the Altar Care sign up sheet on the table in the fellowship hall. Two weeks a month you would put up hymn numbers, fill the oil in the candles on the altar and prepare the communion wine and host. The other weeks in the month are simply putting up hymn numbers and filling the oil in the candles.

If you are interested and have never done this before or if you have questions please contact the church office. I would be happy to answer all questions or to meet you at church and work thru the duties with you.

It doesn't take long, and it is rewarding to be of assistance with our services.

Jean R

CHURCH CLEANING VOLUNTEERS

It's that time of year again! Time to find another year's worth of cleaners. Do you know how to use a vacuum and wash a window? Can you dust? Have a sense of adventure? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you are right for the job! The more volunteers we get the fewer times one will have to clean.



Every week one family, couple, or group cleans the church. This includes vacuuming, cleaning windows, and dusting. The average volunteer cleaner will have to clean 2-3 times during the YEAR! Mr. Pederson and the Upper Grades clean once a month during the school year. FOCE will clean for you if you give their group a small donation. Cleaning supplies are on hand or you can bring your own. No one will come behind your work with the "white glove test." A family of 6 can usually clean the church in about an hour, that's 2 parents working the entire time and 4 kids dusting then hiding out in the cry room. Consider volunteering for the much needed position of church cleaner. As for the adventure, one never knows what interesting things one can find in those last pews while cleaning.

Look for the sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall if you can help with cleaning! If you are on the 2011 time and talent sheets for cleaning, you will be scheduled unless you let Nickie know otherwise.

Thanks to everyone who cleaned during 2011. Your time and cleaning abilities were very much appreciated! THANK YOU!

Kitchen Towel Duty

We are looking for women willing to take home the dirty towels/rags from Gethsemane's kitchen, wash them, then bring the clean towels back, so they can be used again! Looking for 12 women for our monthly towel rotation. More details will be given to those who sign up. There will be a sign-up list with months listed on the fellowship hall table. Thanks!



Thanks loads to the 12 women who cleaned all the towels this year! It was very much appreciated!

Altar Flowers



I'm taking over the altar flower job duties and trying to catch up on the last few months' bills. Please feel free to take your bouquet after the last Sunday service. (Please remove it from the brass container first.)

The altar flower calendar for 2012 is here! The price for altar flowers will be \$25.

Thanks to all of you who have added the beauty of flowers to our worship services.

Look for the sign-up sheet for poinsettias to decorate for our Christmas Services. The cost for each poinsettia will be \$6.00.

We're going Caroling!!!



Please join us on Sunday, December 11, 2011, when we celebrate the season by caroling at nursing homes! We will be going to the two places in which our members, Irene S and Betty H, reside. Please meet at the church at 12:30 if you wish to carpool. The following is our schedule:

1:00 p.m. Golden Living Center
55th & Grover, Omaha

1:45 p.m. Huntington Park Care Center
1507 Gold Coast Road, Papillion

If you have any questions, please call the church office.

DISCIPLESHIP

Christmas For Kids



"Let's Go to Bethlehem!" is the theme for this year's Christmas for Kids. All kids ages 3 (must be potty-trained) through the 5th grade are welcome to participate.

C4K will be held here at Gethsemane, Saturday, December 10th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Join us in celebrating the true meaning of Christmas through story, song, crafts, games and lunch.

You can register your children online at www.gethsemanelutheran.com or on registration forms which are on the fellowship hall table.

Forms are also on the table for items we need donated to make this event successful! There are still many spots open including sugar cookies.

Sunday School Scoop

Thank you to everyone who sang in church on Sunday, November 20th. It was wonderful to hear them sing praises to the Lord on Christ the King Sunday! It has been decided that we will be going caroling for Valentine's Day again this year. Look for more information as it becomes closer.

The theme for the Children's Christmas Service this year is, "We Sing of His Glory," and will be held on Sunday, December 18th at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Miss Hunt will be directing the children during the music time on Sunday mornings, and helping them learn the songs. It is very important that your child attends practice each week. It is also important to spend time at home learning the songs and parts that have been assigned. Please contact Miss Hunt at jhunt@gethsemanelutheran.com with any questions.

December is the last month for our weekly offerings to go to the k.i.d.s care program--PAL-- Partners in Apache Learning-- on the Apache Reservation in Arizona. Both East Fork Lutheran High School and Peridot Lutheran School are on the Apache reservation. The families are in need of tuition assistance for their children to attend one of the schools. Look for information about the 2nd semester offering destination in January.

We are so THANKFUL that Mrs. S has been able to attend Sunday School for the past few weeks. What a blessing!

Leslie B

**Children's Christmas
Services**

**Sunday, December 18
8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.**