



ST. JOHN'S MESSENGER DECEMBER 2011



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Regular Worship Services

8:30 AM & 10:00 AM

Sunday School (K-Grade 6)

Sundays December 4, 11, & 18 at 10:00 AM

Christmas Eve – 7:30 PM

Christmas And New Year's Day – 1 service at 10 AM

PASTOR'S REFLECTIONS~

A friend of mine recently announced on Facebook that she is canceling Christmas.

"Canceling Christmas?" I asked. "What's *that* about?"

She responded that she had been with a group of mothers one day, and the subject of Christmas had come up. Spontaneously she said, "I'm canceling Christmas this year!" and all of the other mothers cheered. As a group, they decided that big celebrations of Christmas and individual birthdays should rotate, every other year, because trying to do it all and do it the way everyone seems to expect it "should" be done just gets too stressful. Why participate in something that brings primarily, not joy, but anxiety and aggravation?

I think she's hit on something when it comes to the stress that surrounds the holidays. Every year at this time, I begin to see articles written about how to simplify the holidays, how to reconnect with the meaning of the season, how to find the joy of Christmas again. And every year, I hear from friends and family and church members about how much they still have to do, how they're nowhere near "ready" for Christmas to come. I see the pressure on their faces. I hear it in their voices. I feel it too. Even when we *try* to simplify the way we celebrate the holidays, we feel the influence of our culture, urging us to make it bigger, better, brighter. We're like Clark Griswold in my husband's favorite Christmas movie, *Christmas Vacation*. All he wants is to have an old-fashioned family Christmas, one that matches the image in his mind's eye. Clark makes it his mission to have the "perfect" Christmas, so he drags his family miles through the snow drifts to find the biggest Christmas tree in existence. He spends hours creating the most elaborate Christmas display in the neighborhood (and then can't figure out how to get the lights to come on and stay on!). He plans to give his family the most wonderful Christmas present

they've ever received (a swimming pool, to be paid for out of his anticipated Christmas bonus).

Of course, none of these things works out the way he hopes and plans, and hilarity ensues (for the movie watcher anyway). As Clark typically does, he nearly drives himself crazy with all of his efforts, but in the end, it turns out the only person who cares about those things is Clark. His family would be happy and content just to be together – and not see him getting so obsessed about every single detail.

So, how about you? Do your holiday preparations help you and your loved ones to enter into a spirit of joy and thanksgiving? Do they cultivate an attitude of anticipation for the coming of God's greatest gift, Jesus? Do they draw us closer together, or do we find ourselves lashing out at each other over small details because of the pressure to have the "perfect" Christmas?

What if we said, "Enough!"? What if we decided that this year we would reclaim the true meaning of Christmas? I'm not saying we should outright cancel Christmas – but what if we focused less on the presents and the decorations, and took Christmas back to the basics? Worship. Time together. Gifts given that reflect our values and show concern for those who make them (see the "Alternative Christmas Gift Ideas" article elsewhere in this newsletter for ideas). Talk with your loved ones about what they most remember and enjoyed from Christmases past. You might be surprised at what matters most – and you might find yourself better able to truly rejoice come Christmas, recognizing that the best gift of all isn't flashy or expensive or over-the-top, but comes to us in a humble stable, in quiet stillness, in the shining of a star.

Watching for Jesus with you,

Pr. Becky



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Advent Evening Prayer

Wednesdays, December 7 & 14, 7:30 PM

Come away from the busy-ness of the season.

Sing. Listen. Pray. Be still.

Soak in the presence of God, and let the Holy Spirit renew *your* spirit.

Christmas Eve

December 24, 7:30 PM

Celebrate the birth of Christ in worship. Hear the Christmas story, sing Christmas carols (including the traditional candlelit singing of *Silent Night*), receive God's meal of Holy Communion, and then go with angels and shepherds to tell the story of what God has done for us and for the world!

Christmas Day

Sunday, December 25, 10 AM

Before (or after) you open those Christmas presents, gather with your St. John's family in worship. Hear God's word, receive God's meal, sing, pray, and rejoice in God's greatest gift of all! Please note that there is only ONE service on this Sunday.

New Year's Day

Sunday, January 1, 10 AM

Welcome the New Year in the presence of the One who is making all things new! Please note that there is only ONE service on this Sunday as well.



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON DECEMBER 15 12 NOON

On Thursday, December 15th at 12 noon, we will have our annual Christmas Luncheon sponsored by WELCA. It's potluck, so bring your favorite dish and share that and fellowship with all the other attendees.

If you know a member who is home-bound who would like to attend, please bring them to join us. Also, please bring some non-perishable food for the folks at the New LIFE Center in Uniondale.

Mark your calendar for December 15 at 12 noon – It's a great way to celebrate the Christmas Season.



CHRISTMAS CAROLING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18 6 PM

Meet at the church (in the Knotty Pine Room) to visit our home-bound members. We'll sing songs and share some Christmas cheer, and then meet back at the church for hot chocolate and goodies. Everyone is welcome! Bring a friend! Look for the sign-up on the bulletin board (so we can know to wait for you in case you are delayed).

St. John's Christmas Cards are still available. Call Joan Pirrone @593-4922 with your orders.

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

As always at this time of year, we encourage you to think about how and where you choose to buy gifts for those you love. As Christians, our decision-making process should not merely be about how to get the most presents at the cheapest cost. We should also think about the impact our purchases have on the people who make the items we buy, the people who work at the stores where we shop, and the impact the manufacturing and transportation of the items has on the environment. (For more on this idea, Pr. Becky recommends the article, "For Granted: \$10 Jeans and Just Consumption," which you can find online at

<http://www.stewardshipoflife.org/2011/11/for-granted-10-jeans-and-just-consumption/>)

As you think about your gift-giving, consider purchasing a gift that will make a real difference in someone's life, offering hope for the future and a better life. (After all, how many of us already have too much "stuff"?)

Consider the following organizations for alternative gift ideas:

- ❖ ELCA Good Gifts: Online at <https://community.elca.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=607> or see the catalog available at the church
- ❖ Heifer International: <http://www.heifer.org/>
- ❖ OxFam: <http://www.oxfamamericaunwapped.com/home.php>
- ❖ Lutheran World Relief: <http://lwrgifts.org/>

For fair trade gifts (which ensure the worker gets a living wage), check out Lutheran World Relief's fair trade store at http://lwr.org/site/c.dmJXKiOYJgI6G/b.7521491/k.12BA/Fair_Trade.htm (Or go to lwr.org and click on the "gifts and gear" tab.)

You can also give the gift of an experience (theater tickets, zoo or museum membership), make gifts by hand, or shop at thrift stores – you never know what you'll find!

If you have other ideas for how to make gift-giving a more joyous and just experience, pass them along to Pr. Becky. We may share your ideas in a future edition of *The Messenger* or online!



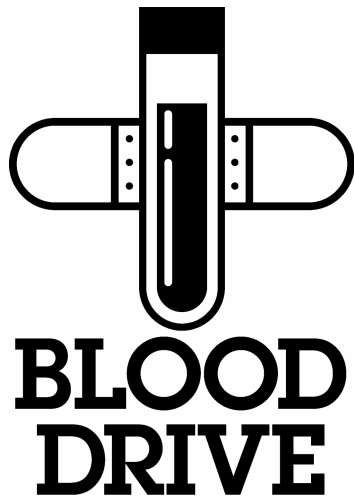
MEMORIAL FUND DONATIONS

Donations have been made to the Memorial Fund in memory of

- ▲ Joe Magazino by Doris E. Kortlang,
- ▲ Jean Brown by Dotty Criscuolo,
- ▲ Marian Dealey by Cora Sarver,
- ▲ Betty Johnson by JoAnne and Andrew Parton, the Speicher Family, and the employees of L'AMY Inc.,
- ▲ Mildred Brady by the Masciello Family, Marjorie Gorr, and Robert and Sharon Ferina and family.

Donations have been made to the Music Fund in memory of

- ▲ Betty Johnson by the Masciello Family, Ruth Williamson and Grace West.



**HOSTED BY ST. JOHN'S
TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2012
3:00PM - 7:30PM**

After the holidays, continuing the "giving" by joining us here at St. John's on Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2012. This will be our second blood drive, and we will be working with Long Island Blood Services to make this a very successful event. Our minimum goal will be to collect 35 pints, which we did during our first drive, but more is always better! We are starting to schedule appointments immediately, so please feel free to call (516-596-6153) or email KCProducer@aol.com to schedule yours.

To those who have given before, we look forward to seeing you again. To those who have never donated, start the year off right by giving the gift of life.

On behalf of the hospitals and patients that are counting on you, THANK YOU! We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on January 3rd. If you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact us at your earliest convenience.

Stephanie Carlstrom
Kimberly Carlstrom
Co-Chairpersons

ANNUAL ADULT RETREAT

Save the date for our annual retreat at the Graymoor Retreat House: **Friday, February 3 – Sunday, February 5, 2012**. It's always a great time of learning, connecting, growing, eating, and relaxing!

Please note that due to increased expenses, the cost of the retreat is **\$160** this year. The cost includes lodging (in private rooms with shared bathrooms) and 6 meals, as well as the retreat programming, all located in beautiful, peaceful surroundings. Never been? Ask someone who has – some folks have been coming for decades and would be happy to share why they come!

Look for the sign-up on the bulletin board. Checks can be made out to "St. John's Lutheran Church" with "retreat" or "Graymoor" in the memo line.

See Pr. Becky with any questions. Hope to see you there!



OFFERING UPDATE

Here is an update on how the weekly offerings are tracking through October 2011:

Offering/General Income YTD	\$81,395
<u>General Expenses YTD</u>	<u>\$88,156</u>
Running Deficit for 2011	\$ 6,761

Thankfully, offerings have been generous. However, as of October 31st, there was a \$6,761 deficit between our offerings and general expenses. As a result, it will be necessary to utilize savings to cover our costs for property insurance.

If you are able, St. Johns would appreciate your help to reduce the shortfall.

Last year, the St John's Fund was established as a means towards maintaining a balanced budget. Would you please consider an additional offering to the St. John's Fund this year? A special envelope is enclosed with this month's Messenger and is also available at each service from your usher.

With your help, St. Johns can have a balanced budget two years in a row!

Respectfully,

Stewardship and Finance Committee



1912 - 2012 MEMORABLE MOMENTS

In 1993 Walter Bonn was listed on the Nassau County Senior Citizen Honor Roll for recognition of his volunteer service as a English as a 2nd Language (ESL) Teacher for newly arrived students that spoke little or no English.

Walter was the longest Sunday School Superintendent of St. John's and for 64 years the longest Charter Member of St. John's.

The death of Emeritus Robert H. Arnold also marked the end of an era. Pastor Arnold was a son of this congregation, baptized, confirmed and married in this Church.



For the past several years St. John's has blessed many members with funds from the Barbara Semmig Scholarship. WELCA is glad to help them as they continue their education.

Past recipients include:

Richard MacLeish, Kristen Masciello, Victoria Diaz, Allison Pirrone, Jessica Diaz, Joseph Pirrone, Robert MacLeish. Jason Lipitz, Robert Koehler (Diakonia Program), Kathryn Montano, Julie Scalza, Alexandra Hagerty, Stephanie Unkel, Eric Larson, Kristina Carlstrom, Amanda Scalza, Erica Lipitz, Russell Larson, Ricky Dusenbury, Karl Feltkamp, Stephanie Carlstrom, Michael Ferneż, Tori DeStefano, Margaret Milano, Kristin Lindman and David Powell.

* If we missed anyone please drop us a note or email. Thank you.

SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE

Sunday School will be lots of fun in the busy month of December! Here's what's happening!

Sunday, **December 4** – Advent Craft

Sunday, **December 11** – Sunday School learns about the seasons of Advent and Christmas

Saturday, **December 17** – Christmas Play Rehearsal, beginning at 10 AM in the sanctuary, followed by Chocolate House Making

Sunday, **December 18** – Share the good news of God's love during the 10 AM worship as part of the Sunday School Christmas play. Then, come Christmas Caroling to our homebound members – meet at St. John's at 6 PM!

We need the following items. If you can help by donating any of them, we'll appreciate it! You may bring them to the church any time up until the date of the activity. Thanks!

- ▲ Metallic wrapping paper (esp. gold or silver) for the Advent Craft on Dec. 4 (The kids will be making stars out of the paper to hang in the Knotty Pine room.)
- ▲ Edible decorations for the chocolate houses on December 17 – colorful candies, mini M&Ms, gumdrops, sprinkles, mini candy canes, pixie sticks, etc; our kids get very creative!

Pr. Becky will be there for the opening of Sunday School on December 11. If your kids are asking you "big" faith/church/God questions, encourage them or help them to write them down & put them in the mailbox in the Knotty Pine room so she can try to answer them during that time!

Don't forget the **Wall of Fame!** Carry out your baptismal promises and help your child/ren grow in the basics of the faith by helping them to learn the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed. When your child can recite each from memory, they'll receive a medal and have their picture displayed on the Wall of Fame! (They don't have to learn all three at once; they can spread it out over time.)



As part of our 100th Anniversary Celebration and in memory of our organist and choir director

Elizabeth Johnson

St. John's Church Presents

"Choose Something Like a Star"

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11th - 4:00 PM

Performed by

The Bel Canto Chorale



Program:

FROSTIANA: Seven poems by Robert Frost set to

music by Randall Thompson

MOZART'S CORONATION MASS

THE LAST WORDS OF DAVID: by Randall Thompson

Christmas carols by John Rutter

A wine and cheese reception will follow

FREE-WILL OFFERING

Youth group news

Next Youth Group meeting: January 8,
2012

No meeting in December.

"Giving Tree". Gift donations are due by December 11th. You may bring in any gifts you have on or before that date and place them in the box in the narthex. The Youth Group will wrap and deliver all presents to the New Life Center. Thank you so much for your generosity!

**Decorating Chocolate Houses:
Saturday, Dec. 17th, 11 AM.**

Bring a bag of candy to help decorate the chocolate houses for our homebound. A pizza lunch will be served.

**Christmas Caroling: Sunday,
December 18th, 6 PM.** Meet us in the Knotty Pine Room. We will visit our homebound members and bring them some Christmas cheer for the holidays. Family and friends welcome! Dessert & hot chocolate will be served when we return to St. John's.

Thank you to Karen Feltkamp, who wrote a letter on the behalf of St. John's Youth Group to the "Fly with the Owls" organization. They have granted a \$500 donation to the youth of St. John's!!

The Youth Group received the following thank you note from our visits on September 11th:

Thank you for the gift basket you made for Larry. He really loved all the goodies and fruit. But, we really appreciate that you made the trip to the nursing home. Larry enjoys having visitors. Thank you so much.

God bless. - Ursula & Larry Lipitz

Young Adults Group

Next Meeting:

Friday, January 13th, 4:00 PM

St. John's Church, Knotty Pine Room

Save the date! Join us for a lively discussion; topic to be announced one week prior to meeting. Open to all college-age and 20 "something" young adults.

For more info, email:

LoriF60@aol.com or
TJDCPOWELL@aol.com





Calendar of Events – December 2011

Thursday, 12/1	Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 PM
Sunday, 12/4	2nd Sunday of Advent Worship, 8:30 & 10 AM Sunday School, 10 AM – Advent Craft Sewing Ministry, 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM Worship & Music, 7:30 PM
Tuesday, 12/6	Advent Evening Prayer, 7:30 PM
Wednesday, 12/7	Stewardship & Finance, 8 PM
Thursday, 12/8	Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 PM
Sunday, 12/11	3rd Sunday of Advent Worship, 8:30 & 10 AM Sunday School, 10 AM Music Sunday Concert, 4 PM Freewill offering will be taken; Wine & Cheese Reception to follow
Tuesday, 12/13	Sewing Ministry, 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM Congregational Council, 8 PM
Wednesday, 12/14	Advent Evening Prayer, 7:30 PM
Thursday, 12/15	Christmas Luncheon , 12 PM, Sponsored by WELCA Choir, 7:30 PM
Saturday, 12/17	Sunday School Christmas Play Rehearsal , 10 AM Chocolate House Making + Pizza – after play rehearsal (around noon)
Sunday, 12/18	4th Sunday of Advent Worship, 8:30 & 10 AM Sunday School Christmas Play , 10 AM worship Christmas Caroling to the Home-bound , 6 PM
Saturday, 12/24	Christmas Eve Worship, 7:30 PM
Sunday, 12/25	Christmas Day Worship, 1 service at 10 AM
Monday, 12/26-	Church Office Closed
Friday, 12/30	Pr. Becky is reachable by phone (516.547.8392)

Looking ahead to January 2012...

Sunday, January 1	Name of Jesus Sunday Worship, 1 service at 10 AM
Sunday, January 8	Baptism of Our Lord Sunday Worship, 8:30 & 10 AM Sunday School, 10 AM – White Christmas Gifts brought to worship
Sunday, January 23	Annual Meeting following 10 AM worship

SERVERS FOR DECEMBER 2011

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>ACOLYTES</u>	<u>ASSISTING MINISTERS</u>	<u>LECTORS</u>
ADVENT 2				
12/4	8:30AM	Grace Mata	Roger Vargas	Roger Vargas
	10:00AM	Jason Pace	Kim Carlstrom	Arlene Moglia
	CRUCIFER	Michael Fernez		
ADVENT 3				
12/11	8:30AM	Elizabeth Hanson	Dorothy Criscuolo	Gerda Weber
	10:00AM	Ashley Gavin	Bruce Feltkamp	Susan Masciello
	CRUCIFER	Ryan Milano		
ADVENT 4				
12/18	8:30AM	Jennifer Dalton	Andrew Dunn	Andrew Dunn
	10:00AM	Kaitlyn Gavin	Ryan Dusenbury	Chris Powell
	CRUCIFER	Jason Lipitz		
CHRISTMAS EVE				
12/24	7:30PM	Lillian Mata	Hank Lenz	Claire Lenz
	CRUCIFER	Kristin Lindman	Bill Lindman	
	TORCH BEARER	Carrie Feltkamp		
	TORCH BEARER	Danielle Dake		
	GOSPEL BEARER	Margaret Milano		
CHRISTMAS DAY				
12/25	10:00AM		Kim Barbaro	Joan Pirrone

If you cannot serve on a day you are scheduled, please find a replacement and notify the church office and the appropriate coordinator:

Bob Koehler - Assisting Ministers and Crucifers/Gospel bearers: 678-6623

Jill Pace - Acolytes and Torch bearers: 599-8896

Claire Lenz - Lectors: 872-2063

*The Messenger is a monthly publication of
St. John's Lutheran Church
13 Blake Avenue, Lynbrook, NY 11563
(516) 599-0778 www.stjohnslynbrook.org
Rev. Rebecka J. Feters, Pastor*

Anyone wishing to include an article in The Messenger should email it directly to St. John's Lutheran Church E-mail: stjohnslynbrook@aol.com or mail it to the church (Attn: Editor). Deadline for all submissions is the 15th of each month.

