



The Messenger

*News about our church,
our ministries and our people*

December 2012

Living Waters Lutheran Church and Preschool

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Merry Christmas to All

The next issue of The Messenger will appear in January. Deadline for articles is December 21. See last page for details.

Thanks,
Judy Johnson,
Editor

A Handy Gift Idea

Finish up your Christmas shopping in Hanson Hall. Fair Trade coffee and chocolate make a great gift for your host or for just about anyone. Your purchase also helps the producers of these products—a win-win for everyone. Products are located on the bookshelf space. A canister is provided for payment.



December Worship Dates

Include Worship in Your
Christmas Plans

December 9 Second Sunday in Advent
8:05 Hymn Sing 8:15 Regular Service
10:00 Regular Service with Special Music
by Preschool Children (no hymn sing)

December 16 Third Sunday in Advent
8:15; 10:00 Regular Services

December 23 Fourth Sunday in Advent
8:15; 10:00 Regular Services

December 24 Christmas Eve
7:00 Candlelight Service, No Communion
10:00 Candlelight Service, Communion

December 25 Christmas Day
10:00 Celebration Service, Communion

December 30 First Sunday of Christmas
10:00 Regular Service, Communion
(note: just one service this Sunday)

Welcome Back to the Limburgs

**Pastor Jim and Martha join us in
December and February**

We know the Limburgs pretty well by now and we always look forward to their time with us. Since the newsletter was not being published during their previous visits with us as Guest Pastor, a special narrative about them is printed on page 5. Check it out.

A Message From the Pastor

The universe is made of stories, not atoms.
- Muriel Rukeyser (American Poet)

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

-The Holy Bible (John 1:14)

Each year, we delight in the opportunity to come to church to celebrate Christmas and the retelling of how God came to earth to save us, becoming one of us in the Christ child—born of Virgin Mary—Jesus of Nazareth.

This story has much more emotional power than the sentiment that surrounds it. This story is much richer than the commercial value that is attached to it. This story not only changed the world. This story changed you and me. Christmas is not just history; it is your story and my story of God loving us one-by-one. God loves us so much he became one of us.

God became a human child, so we humans could become the children of God.

Though familiar, the Christmas story always remains full of wonder.

The Christmas story reminds us that the Bible is full of stories of God's mighty acts of salvation—stories we need to re-read and treasure.

A few months ago, I mentioned to Dr. Jim Limburg an idea I had to develop and share with others at Living Waters a list of the top 100 essential Bible stories. Jim greeted this idea with enthusiasm. He, then, went ahead and developed such a list of Bible stories to



be shared with us during his Monday night Bible studies when he returns in December 2012 and February 2013.

Recently, Pastor Limburg sent the following remarks about the “course” he plans to share with us this winter. He wrote:

My course is entitled "100 Bible Stories That Could Change Your Life." I was reading some Bible stories to a couple of our grandchildren, ages 8 and 4 at the time. Every once in a while I would throw in a reference to Ben or his sister Eleya, just to keep them interested.

After finishing one of the stories I asked Ben how he liked them. "Oh I like them OK, Grandpa," he said, giving the answer that he knew I expected. But then he added a comment, "But I like them best when they're about me."

Honest, and right on target, I thought. All of us are interested in stories -- any stories, including stories from the Bible, "when they are about me."

And here's the surprising thing. You will discover that, rightly understood, these stories in the Bible are about you.

I plan to supply the "Top 100" list to everyone, and then to go through selected stories during the class periods.

Come and join us Monday evenings at 7:00 in Hanson Hall.

In Christ, Pastor Dell

All Are Welcome At This Table

A story about a small group that had a big idea



*As often as you did it for one
of my least brothers, you did
it for me.*

It is amazing how fast time goes by. The community outreach ministry was started a few years ago by a small group that met in the preschool room. The desire from this group was to prepare a meal a couple days a month for the homeless and needy in our community. The North Port Salvation Army had sent out letters asking area churches for help sponsoring a dinner to feed the community.

Funny thing, only three churches responded. We began by serving about twelve people. That number has grown to anywhere from 55 to the 70 who came to the last November dinner. We have found that the dinner helps those who are homeless, but also those who have homes and are struggling to pay their bills.

Another interesting effect about the current economic situation is that it has placed more than one family under one roof and has created another need. We decided after a couple of dinners to set out health kits. After seeing the response of people needing such a simple thing as a washcloth or toothpaste, we decided to add clothing and shoes. We cannot even count the amount of clothing that has gone out of our church.

One day we had a man walk in to ask if we had a bike. He'd just landed a job, but had lost his car. The lights went on and next thing we know we have "Ron's Bike Shop" up and running. The neat thing about Ron is that he is not a member of this church but one of the people who came for dinner. He just wanted to give back and this was a great opportunity for him. Through the bike ministry we have

handed out bikes to adults and children, for work and school. It's been a wonder to see how God continues to open doors for this ministry.

We partner with several local churches, North Port Social Services, the Back Pack Angels, The Kids Clothes Closet and the local Partnership to End Homelessness for Sarasota County. The need in North Port became so apparent that out of these groups, the North Port Food Coalition was formed. That food pantry gives us food if we need it.

These groups have all worked very closely together but we find such a great resource in the churches working together. That is how we got involved with the bread and pastry ministry: one church, one phone call and next thing we know, we have been placed on the every Wednesday pick-up of bread from our local Publix. So, at 9:45 every Wednesday evening we are at Publix to pick up the bread and pastries they donate. A neat note about that is we share our goodies with Willow Creek, a residence for low-income seniors.

Because of determination and warm hearts, a few of our Outreach Ministry members took time to become Red Cross Members and we

(continued page 4)

(Welcome at This Table continued:)

are now a certified Inclement Weather Shelter. We opened our doors one night last year and had three people come in out of the cold. We have already been in contact with North Port Fire and Rescue and are ready to provide emergency shelter during cold nights this winter.

We handed out 29 turkeys for Thanksgiving and are getting ready to prepare our Christmas dinners for distribution.

We thank God every day for this ministry and for our new friends and families. The ministry has come a long way since those first twelve dinners were prepared and served.

We have learned that everyone has a story, a past of hurt or a present hardship that we all can share. We pray, with God's help, to continue serving our community. The need is still

here and every time we hear of a success story, another family with children will walk through the door.

We encourage you to come for fellowship with us at a dinner and meet some really neat people.

Thank you, with love and prayers,
The Kitchen Gang

Editor's note: *Thanks to Jody Shelton who supplied the information for this story. Jody and Larry and many others have worked diligently to make this ministry a success and we thank them for their service and dedication.*

Also thanks to the congregation for the generous and continued support through donations of food and money.



Food for Thought: "The people of the early church were so generous that they put their property into a common stock lest any should be in need. They were not communists, they were Christians; and the difference between a communist and a Christian is this—a communist says, "All yours is mine;" while a Christian says, "all mine is yours;" and that is a very different thing. The one is for getting, and the other for giving."

- C.H. Spurgeon, English Preacher, 1834—1892

Living Gifts...

Notes on Stewardship from Scott Hansen

A big THANK YOU and "hats off" to everyone who returned pledge cards during our "Abundant Joy and Overflowing Generosity" stewardship campaign. Didn't it feel good to stretch! It's wonderful to see everyone's enthusiasm as we see Living Waters grow in the work of God.

As the year comes to an end, please remember Living Waters in your year-end tax planning and charitable giving goals. Please let us know if we can help or answer any questions.

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

-2 Corinthians 9:6-7

**All About the Limburgs...
in Their Own Words
by Pr. Jim and Martha**

Martha and I first met in the fall of 1952, when we were both enrolling as freshmen at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. I remember our first conversation. I was standing behind her in the lunch line and telling her I would not be staying long because I would be the first graduate of Redwood Falls (Minnesota) high school who did not make the famous Luther College Band, in which case I was going to transfer to some other college. My dad was the band leader and my audition had not gone well, and I would bring dishonor to our family and our school and our town. But as it turned out I did make the band, and Martha, a preacher's daughter, did too, and we've been making music together ever since.

I started college as a math and physics major with the goal of becoming a high school science teacher. After I hit calculus and then differential equations, however, I decided that math was not my thing. I kept playing in the band, taking music courses (partly because Martha was in those classes, too) and wound up with a major in music and minors in math and German.

All through college, however, I discovered that courses in Bible and theology were the most interesting of anything I took. I think it was a course on the "minor prophets" that hooked me when I heard the call from the prophet Amos to "let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." This seemed to me to be what the life of a Christian person ought to be all about.

A professor suggested seminary to me. I took beginning Greek, and found it much more interesting than differential equations. So after I taught a year in Ellendale, Minnesota, while

Martha was teaching 90 miles away at Hopkins, Minnesota, we decided to get married, and I would enroll at Luther Seminary in St. Paul.

Fast forward: From St. Paul to Santa Monica, California for a year's Internship. After graduating from the seminary in 1961, we moved to Richmond, Virginia, where I did graduate work on the Old Testament at Union Seminary.

My first call came from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, S.D where they needed a specialist in Old Testament. We lived there for some 16 years, with a slight interruption to finish my Ph.D. in Richmond.

Meanwhile, after our four children were in school all day, Martha, a teacher of English, German and Social Studies, became a church librarian in Sioux Falls. She taught piano lessons and played flute and piccolo in the Sioux Falls Symphony, as well as in churches and small groups.

In the spring of 1970 all six of us got out of school early and moved to Heidelberg, Germany, where I continued Old Testament studies. We transferred from train to train with 21 pieces of luggage.

In 1978 I received a call to teach Old Testament at Luther Seminary where we stayed until retirement. After moving to the Twin Cities, Martha worked in offices at the University of MN and later took her favorite job as assistant to the director of Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, where she worked for 12 years.

In 2002 we built a home at Woman Lake in Northern Minnesota and moved there.

In 2010 we noticed an ad seeking a "guest pastor" in North Port, Florida, and are now enjoying our third time around on this assignment! Thanks to the Shiells, Judy Johnson, and the good people of Living Waters for the fine times we have been having with you!



Here We Come A -Caroling

Join the choir for a few hours of caroling on Thursday, December 6.

We meet at church at 5:00, then travel to the North Port Pines cafeteria to sing a selection of well-known Christmas Carols for the residents at 5:15.

From there we will go to the Gardens of North Port to sing, beginning about 5:30. Our last stop for the evening is Quality Health Care, arriving about 6:00.

If you plan to join the choir anywhere en route, plan to come a little early because these times are approximate, depending on how much time was spent at the earlier facilities.

Song sheets will be provided.

Council Members Elected

At the annual meeting for election of Church Council and Committee Members, held November 25, several new people were elected to fill vacant positions.

New Council Members:

Tom Towne, Karen Feldman, David Lanning, Gayle Backiel

Returning Council Members:

Jerry Pauley, Kari Reece, Judy Johnson, Scott Hanson, Ellen Hanson, Carol Piltz

Nominating Committee for 2013:

Marty Savard, Daryl Mendez, Patty Pauley, Jane Fundyga, Kris Dines, Genn Mendez

Endowment Committee for 2013:

Dru Munson, Daryl Mendez, Scott Hanson, Pastor Shiell

We express many thanks to Daryl Mendez, who has been Council President, and to Marty Savard. Each has served on the Council for the six-year maximum.



Web Site Development News

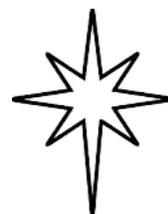
We are working to expand our Living Waters church website to be able to provide more information to our members who frequently use computers.

- We are adding to the information on our PASTORS2GO page to include short bios and comments from those pastors who have participated in this program.
- We are hoping to develop a page dedicated to the small groups and their activities.
- In conjunction with the process of developing a new pictorial directory for our church we are planning to include an on-

line version as a part of this expansion process. We will be able to do this as a secure site where each member/friend/associate member of LWLC will set up his/her own personal password to be able to view this on-line directory. The general public will not be able to access any of our personal information.

- **If anyone does NOT wish to be included in this on-line directory we are asking that you please send an email to: office@livingwaterslutheran.com asking NOT to be included.** If you are reading this as a printed copy and do not use a computer, please notify Kris in the church office if you do NOT wish to be included.
- To check out our web site go to: www.livingwaterslutheran.com
- Questions? See Ellen Hanson

'Tis the Season... Advent first, then Christmas



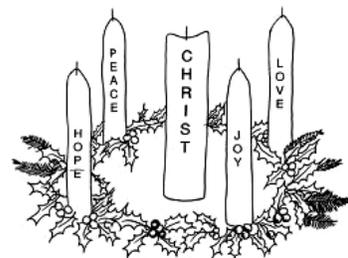
The meaning of Advent: The word is from the Latin "to come." The season marks the beginning of the church year and comprises the four weeks before Christmas. The first clear reference to a celebration of Advent is believed to have occurred in the 6th century. Today, we prepare ourselves to celebrate the birth of Jesus and await his return.

The Advent Wreath: The principal themes of Advent are symbolized by the Advent Wreath.

Week 1: Hope Week 2: Peace

Week 3: Joy—The Pink Candle Week 4: Love

At the center of the wreath is the Christ Candle.



The Advent Wreath originated a few hundred years ago among the Lutherans of eastern Germany. It is also believed that the Advent Calendar originated with the German Lutherans.

The liturgical color for Advent is Blue, the color of hope.



Things to Do in December...

Christmas Card Tree: place a card on the tree in the narthex and give a donation in lieu of stamps. The donation goes to Kathie's Fund, which provides scholarships for young women who are entering the ELCA rostered ministry. **Toys for Social Services:** WELCA and the Sunday School children are collecting new, unwrapped toys and games (no stuffed toys) for children 1-16 years of age. Bring your toys or donation to church by December 16.

Be in the Pictorial Directory and Do a Good Deed Too

Don't forget to sign up to have your picture taken for our new directory. On Sunday morning, see the friendly person either in the narthex or in the social hall who is waiting to enroll you. You can also sign up online Monday through Saturday through www.livingwaterslutheran.com, the church web site. Just click on the family photo to follow the link.

December sittings are filled. Photos will be taken again on Friday, January 25 and Saturday, January 26. You will automatically

receive a free 8 X 10 picture plus a pictorial directory when they are completed.

If you decide to buy pictures, Life Touch, the company who will be producing our Pictorial Directory, is offering a discount. When you make a donation of food of any kind to our kitchen to help feed the hungry, you will receive a \$5.00 off coupon. Just bring your food to your photo appointment and we will gladly give you the coupon. This can be combined with any other offers Life Touch may have.

For questions or help, contact Gayle Backiel at 423-6609 or Pat Keller at 423-1945.

On a personal note...

From Pastor Dell and Diane Shiell... We want to say, "Thank you," to everyone for your kind expressions of concern, your prayers, your cards, the comforting Prayer Shawl for Diane, and your offers to help lighten our load following our tragic car accident on November 11. Please accept our gratitude.

Happy Birthday... to Karl Mortensen, December 2.

Our Sympathy...

- to the family of Peggy Kasch. Peggy passed away on November 6. Mail cards to son: Matthew Kasch, 3404 Hampton St., Port Charlotte, FL 34298.

- to the family of Ethel Breneman. Ethel passed away on November 12. Mail cards to son: Richard Breneman, 6343 Talbot St., North Port, FL 34287.



**Women of
Living Waters**



You are invited

to a

Christmas Party

Saturday, December 8, 2012

at 11:30 am

in the Social Hall

**Bring your favorite salad topping to share
and one dozen cookies to trade
We will eat lunch, sing Carols,
play games, have fun**

Bring a friend if you like

Merry Christmas

Pastor's Bible Study
Monday Nights 7:00—Hanson Hall
With Rev. Dr. James Limburg

*100 Bible Stories That
Could Change Your Life*

The Messenger is published monthly by Living Waters Lutheran Church with printed copies distributed the first Sunday of each month. Copies are also available at: www.livingwaterslutheran.com and via email distribution.

To have information included in the newsletter, please write your content and send it to Judy Johnson: j3john@comcast.net. Articles must be submitted by the 21st of each month for publication the following month and may be edited. Pictures are not printed.

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