



The Messenger

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

December 2013

Living Waters Lutheran Church and Preschool

About This Issue...

There are many important dates in articles throughout this issue. Be sure to mark them on your calendar and keep this issue handy all month so you participate in this most glorious season of our church and of Christianity.

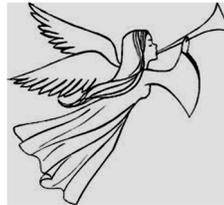
Merry Christmas!

Judy Johnson,
Editor and Publisher



New Time to Decorate Your Church Wednesday Evening, December 4

Join the decorating crew this year as we put up all those familiar and welcome Christmas decorations. We will gather at 5:00pm and make quick work of transforming our spaces. Pizza will be served to all helpers when we finish, about 6:15 or so. Stay for the Bible Study at 7:00.



December Worship Dates

Include worship in your
Christmas plans

December 1 First Sunday in Advent

8:15 Regular Service

10:00 Regular Service

December 8 Second Sunday in Advent

8:05 Carols Hymn Sing, 8:15 Regular Service

9:50 Carols Hymn Sing, 10:00 Regular Service

December 15 Third Sunday in Advent

8:15 Regular Service

10:00 Preschool Program and Worship

December 22 Fourth Sunday in Advent

8:15 Regular Service

10:00 Regular Service

Guest Harpist at both 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 29 First Sunday of Christmas

10:00 Service with Carols, Communion

(note: just one service this Sunday)

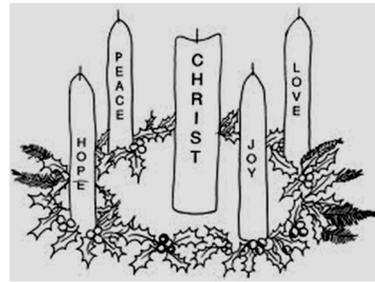
**"O come, all ye faithful, joyful
and triumphant! O come ye,
O come ye to Bethlehem."**



A Message From the Pastor

“Prepare the way for the Lord” (Matthew 3:3)

“Prepare the way of the Lord” is a familiar Advent message. But a good question is, “How do we prepare the way of the Lord?”



Here are a few suggestions:

Pray. “God, open my heart. Make me receptive to your Word and your Will. Help me face the truth about myself with courage and honesty. Teach me your ways. Correct me and lead me. Help me confess my sins—my shortcomings and failures.”

Trust God’s promises. God will provide for you and protect you. Believe this. God will make a way. It is our job to trust God, not to be perfect.

Share God’s love. We are not alone. The highway from heaven is wide. The Christ-child was born to save all of us. We need to bless others, to be a witness to Christ and an instrument of his love. Believe that God will use you to prepare the way for mercy and salvation to reach others.

The way from God to us has already been prepared. Christ is standing at the door and knocking. Welcome him into your heart and your life. Thank God for his Christmas gift to you. Give a generous Christmas gift to Jesus as you make decisions about your offerings in December.

In Christ,
Pastor Dell

More Ways You Can Prepare

Put this page on your refrigerator door for easy reference.



Take Advantage of Opportunities at Living Waters to Make December a Special Time of the Year

- December 4, (Wednesday) 5:00pm: Help decorate the church for Christmas with pizza afterwards; Bible study at 7:00 with Pastor Limburg.
- December 5, (Thursday) 4:45pm: Christmas Caroling with choir (see page 8)
- December 15 (Sunday) at the 10:00am service: Preschool Christmas Program
- December 24, Christmas Eve: Two Candlelight Services - the Family Service at 7:00pm and a Communion Service at 10:00pm.
- December 25, Christmas Day: Worship at 10:00am with Holy Communion
- December 29, Sunday after Christmas: One worship service only at 10:00am. We will continue the Christmas celebration with a Christmas Carol hymn sing.

See complete worship schedule for December on page 1.

NEWS FLASH

IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE OUR 40th BIRTHDAY

December 2014 will mark the 40th anniversary of Living Waters Lutheran Church. We would like to celebrate this 40th year milestone throughout the year and then have a culminating event in December. Our overall theme for 2014 will be:

***Reflection and Renewal –
Celebrating 40 Years as
Living Waters Lutheran Church***

Our goal is to have one activity or project each month that would involve or engage the entire congregation.

Pastor Dell along with Judy Johnson will sponsor the kick-off for our year of celebration on Unity Sunday, January 19. The theme of this month will be to celebrate that Christ is worshipped around the world.

February's activities will be themed around celebrating our love for our church family. We will celebrate Living Waters Volunteers on Appreciation Sunday, February 16 with special recognition during worship and with a congregational meal prepared by the Community Dinners Team. The Marketing Team will be hosting a chili dinner on February 22 with Michael Hirst as our entertainer for the event.

December's birthday celebration will be sponsored by the Church Council. The theme is celebrating the joy of Christ's birth. This will be the culmination of our year long celebration of the 40th birthday of Living Waters and will include our birthday cake.

That leaves just nine months to fill. Listed on the next page you will see the months for 2014 and the themes that we have suggested for each. We are hoping that individuals and small groups will participate by selecting an open month and planning an activity with their friends or small group

for that month. Ideally, most activities will be held on a Sunday so we can involve the whole congregation. These activities do not have to be huge projects – maybe just posters or hand-outs or something special for coffee fellowship. BE CREATIVE! The main idea is to celebrate 40,40,40! Let's keep the Reflection and Renewal concept alive throughout the year! Be sure to incorporate the number 40 in the title of your project. Use the newsletter to publicize your project.



Please consider this request and let us know which one of the available months you would like to select. You can submit your ideas (see next page) to any of the committee members listed. Together, we can live out our three commitments – to Christ, to the body of Christ, and to the work of Christ in North Port and beyond!

PS: As you make your plans for your month, please note that the Church office staff is not available to work with you on your project. If your project requires copying, you will need to make arrangements to personally run your copies. Please be aware that our church machine is a printer, not a copier, so any copying needs should be kept to an absolute minimum. If you have any questions, please contact a committee member listed on the next page.

Thank you for helping to make 2014 a memorable year at Living Waters.

1974—2014

Themes for Reflection and Renewal - Celebrating 40 Years as Living Waters Lutheran Church

January: Celebrate that Christ is worshipped around the world (Unity Sunday) incorporate some international elements into the service
Sponsors: Pastor Dell and Judy Johnson

February: Celebrate our love for our church family
Feb. 16 Volunteer appreciation Sunday
Sponsors: Worship and Music Team
Feb. 16 Congregational Meal
Sponsors: Community Dinner Team
Feb. 21 Chili Dinner
Sponsors: Marketing Team

March: Celebrate our ability and need to be open to change (Lenten season); growing to serve others
Sponsors:

April: Celebrate Easter, victory in the cross
Sponsors:

May: Celebrate God's creation (spring); possible community connection
Sponsors:

June: Celebrate going out into our world - our community; start of summer - getting to know our neighbors – whomever they are and wherever they may be
Sponsors:

July: Celebrate freedom of religion - go tell others; the joy of being a Christian in America
Sponsors:

August: Celebrate our personal time of spiritual growth and contemplation - enjoying our quiet times; vacations
Sponsors:

September: Celebrate our need to learn and teach; start of the school year, Sunday School, Preschool, Bible Study, Small Groups etc.
Sponsors:

October: Celebrate our Lutheran tradition and heritage (Reformation Day etc.) Respecting and understanding our past
Sponsors:

November: Celebrate our future as a church - where we are headed, stewardship
Sponsors:

December: Our birthday month. Celebrate the joy of Christ's birth (Christmas) putting Christ first in our hearts and lives
Sponsors: Church Council



Today's Date: _____

Month Requested: _____

Sponsor/s: _____

Name of Small Group if Applicable: _____

Brief Description of Your Plan: (Be sure to include 40 in your title.)

Please submit this sheet to Ellen Hanson, Scott Hanson or Judy Johnson

Women of the Church Annual Luncheon

Come join us for the annual Women's Christmas Party,
Saturday, December 14
at 12:00 noon

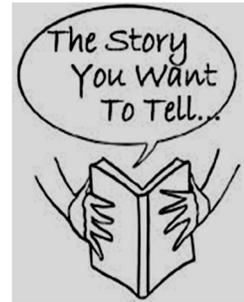
in the Social Hall. We will have a luncheon followed by a short business meeting where a new VP and Secretary will be elected. We will sing Christmas Carols and play games and there will be a few other surprises too.

Each woman is asked to bring her favorite salad ingredient to share (such as olives or eggs or cheese, etc.) and one dozen cookies for a cookie exchange. Come celebrate with your Living Waters friends.



Do You Remember the Time...

As you saw in the story on pages three and four, Living Waters is celebrating its 40th birthday in 2014. To help us all appreciate and understand our journey of these 40 years, I am asking you to send me your story about the early days of our church. You might remember worshipping in Hanson Hall...you might remember some "firsts" for the church...you might remember a humorous story about our beginnings...you might remember a really touching moment in our history...you might remember the day our current sanctuary was dedicated...you might remember the first time you attended this church. I think you get the idea. Stories can be a few lines or a few paragraphs and can be sent throughout the year.



Send your stories to Judy Johnson at: j3john@comcast.net. Or if you would rather write it out, just give me your written story. I'll publish as many as possible throughout the year. Be sure to include your name(s) and the year you joined Living Waters. Don't be shy...send them in!

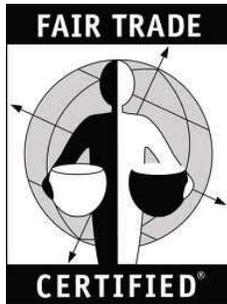
Thanks,
Judy Johnson

Professor Limburg to teach on Luke: *"Just What the Doctor Ordered!"*

On December 4, 11, and 18 guest pastor James Limburg will continue teaching in his series "Bible Stories That Could Change Your Life" by considering the Good News according to Luke. We shall discover that the "beloved physician's" (Colossians 4:14) take on Jesus seems remarkably suited for today's situation.

While we hear nothing about the debate concerning statin drugs, we do find a special concern for essential issues of our time. What about the poor, the down and out, the widow, the outsider? What of the role of women in our societies? What of our attitude toward foreigners and outsiders?

Finally, we discover that a most important theme running through Luke's version is Happiness -- more precisely the joy that goes with discovering the good news about Jesus. Come join us Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm. Bring a Bible if you wish, or use one of ours.



Fair Trade Coffee Pour Justice To The Brim!

Coffee and Lutherans go together! Coffee is frequently present in our Christian fellowship and is also big business. Yet, the majority of coffee farmers often struggle just to make a simple living.

Through the Lutheran World Relief (LWR) Coffee Project, farmers benefit from Fair Trade and earn a better price for their top-quality products. This allows thousands of people around the world to stay on their land, put food on the table, and keep kids in school. Fair Trade farmers are also good stewards of the environment.

The conventional coffee trade includes many middlemen who each take a cut of the money you spend on coffee, leaving less for the farmers who grow it. Fair Trade and the LWR Coffee Project eliminate middlemen so more of your coffee dollar is paid to the farmer.

Fair Trade coffee is available for sale on the bookcase in the back of the social hall. Fair Trade coffee is also a wonderful gift for your host during the Thanksgiving and Christmas season.

Council Update

By Scott Hanson, Council President

Hats off and a big round of applause to all of the volunteers that make Living Waters a very special place. During the past year we have seen more and more people step up to help, participate and enjoy the many activities offered by our church. There is a real sense of family developing among the members of the congregation.

We can't spend much time looking back at our accomplishments over the past year as the new year is just ahead! The council is eagerly making plans for a very exciting 2014. We will begin the year with several new council members. It will be great to hear their new ideas and experience their enthusiasm.



A HUGE thank you from the Prayer Shawl Ministry to everyone who attended the biscuit and gravy breakfast. Your donations are very much appreciated and will allow our members to continue to create shawls for those who are ill, struggling, or deserve a special blessing. Thanks again for supporting this important ministry! Special thank you to Jerry Pauley for being our most excellent chef.

Every month of 2014 will feature special attention to our 40th Birthday. You will be able to participate and experience this important year as we link *our* past to *our* present and most importantly to *our* future. Please look to get involved during this celebration.

As a brief reminder, there is still time to take advantage of some year end tax strategies through our Charitable Giving Program. We have already received a gift of stock which benefited both the donor as well as the church. No Capital gains and a tax deduction! It's very easy and may not be available next year.

The future looks very bright for Living Waters Lutheran.....because you are a part of it.

From Here To Eternity: “Will 2013 Be Last Year For Charitable IRA Rollover?”

Unless the government passes new legislation, 2013 will be the last year that it is possible to make charitable gifts known as a Charitable IRA Rollover.

This means that you have between now and December 31, 2013, to **give directly from your IRA to Living Waters** – without having to first recognize the distribution as income on your tax return.

If you are an IRA owner age 70½ or older, you are able to make a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) up to \$100,000.

What are the requirements?

- An IRA rollover donor needs to have reached age 70 ½.
- Up to \$100,000 may be transferred from an IRA by Dec. 31 2013.
- An IRA rollover gift needs to be an outright gift.
- An IRA rollover can be made from a regular IRA or a Roth IRA.

An IRA rollover qualifies for the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) of an IRA owner.

How do I proceed?

- **Check with your tax advisor about whether giving from your IRA is appropriate for your situation.**
- Contact your IRA custodian to obtain any forms they may require and follow their instructions. Let your IRA custodian know that you are giving to **Lutheran Church of the Living Waters, PO Box 8064, North Port, FL 34290.**
- Let the Living Waters Treasurer (Carol Piltz) know that you are intending to make a rollover distribution from your IRA. Please provide information about your IRA custodian and the amount to be received, so we can

match paperwork and the check from your custodian.

- Although most IRA custodians transfer IRA rollover funds directly to public charities, like Living Waters, some IRA custodians issue a check payable to the charity but send the check to you (the IRA owner) for forwarding to the charity. This transaction still qualifies under the law as an IRA rollover if the check is issued payable to the charity and you deliver the check prior to Dec. 31, 2013.

Any questions? Talk with a member of the Legacy Gift Planning Team – Scott Hanson, Dru Munson, Daryl Mendez, Diane Shiell, or Pastor Dell.



We Need YOU!

The Bible says in 1 Peter 4:10-11, “God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.” (NLT) When we use our abilities to help each other, God is glorified.

Our vision is “sharing God’s love in word and deed by praising God and serving the community.” To accomplish this, we emphasize three commitments – our commitment to Christ, our commitment to the body of Christ, and our commitment to the work of Christ in North Port and beyond. If we believe that we have a responsibility as a member of our church family to serve our neighbors – both those at Living Waters and also those in North Port and beyond, then we all need to do our part!

We really need **YOU** to help out with some of our recurring jobs – especially on Sundays.

Please consider volunteering for one of these opportunities to help fulfill your commitment as a member of your Living Waters family!

On a personal note...

Happy Birthday

Consider making a connection with a member by sending a birthday card. If your name has been omitted from this list of members or the date is in error, please contact the church office to make the correction.

- Dec. 1 Jesse Buck
- Dec. 2 Bill Buck, Karl Mortensen
- Dec. 3 Evan Boyette
- Dec. 5 Rich Pelto
- Dec. 7 Brandon Bozich
- Dec. 9 David Bozich
- Dec. 17 Moe May, Lee DeWitt
- Dec. 19 Lauren Kolb, Harold Boeck
- Dec. 22 Donna Godshall
- Dec. 23 Vickie Wilcox
- Dec. 24 Karen Hoepfner, Herb Moehling, Carol Sutton
- Dec. 27 Marilyn Alexander
- Dec. 29 Megan Hess
- Dec. 30 Garrett Buck

The Messenger is published monthly by Living Waters Lutheran Church with printed copies usually 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, unless otherwise specified, for publication the following month and may be edited. Pictures are not printed.



December 5— A Grand Night for Singing Christmas Carols

Here is an opportunity to bring a little Christmas merriment to others this year. Join the members of the choir in caroling at the nearby assisted living and nursing homes.

Meet at church on Thursday, December 5 between 4:30-4:45 and join the choir for one evening. We will car pool to the North Port Pines to begin singing in their dining room at 5:00. From there we will go to the Gardens of North Port to bring the residents some Christmas cheer. Finally we will go to Quality Health Care and walk the halls singing to bring joy to those in the nursing home.

As the evening ends, we will return to the church for cider or hot chocolate and donuts. If you have any questions, contact Gayle Backiel at 423-6609

Physical Address

Living Waters Lutheran Church and Preschool
12475 Chancellor Blvd.
Port Charlotte, FL 33953

Mailing Address

PO Box 8064
North Port, FL 34290

941-625-8090

www.livingwaterslutheran.com

Office Hours: 9:00am-Noon, Mon. - Thurs.

If you have questions about our church, its ministries or about becoming a member, please contact Pastor Dell Shiell via email at: pastor@livingwaterslutheran.com