

Special points of interest:

December 2007

- Women's Fellowship Christmas Dinner
- Elisabeth von Trapp Concert
- Joy/Christmas Fund Offering
- New Wheels For Kevin Fundraiser

Holiday Greetings From the Staff at St. Luke Union Church



ST. LUKE UNION CHURCH

New Directions

Adopt-A-Family

Lamplighters has been given a family of three for the Adopt-A-Family program.

The family includes:
Mother (wears size large tops and size 11 pants)
Father (wears size large tops and size 34x30 pants - boot cut)
Daughter (17 months

old, wears size 24 months)

Any contributions from the congregation would be great, either items or money (see page 8).

A sign-up sheet is posted in Fellowship Hall.

Continued on page 8

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December Birthdays

Caroline Fleming - 1
 Ron Nuttall - 2
 Abbie Baker - 3
 Sarah Franks - 4
 Darlene Trower - 5
 Doris Rice - 9
 Sarah Luna - 11
 Bob Hinthorn - 12
 Alex Kraft - 12
 Sara Ireland - 16
 Jeanne Rann - 16



Daniel Ferrier - 17

Lynne Wright - 19
 Tony Swanson - 20
 Kim Feicke - 21
 Abbi Noland - 21
 Ray Hunt - 22
 Louise Moore - 22
 Shirley Otto - 23
 Keith Jean-Baptiste - 24
 Nancy Kraft - 27
 John Belletete - 28

Money Matters

October 31, 2007

	ACTUAL	BUDGET
GENERAL FUND		
Receipts	\$189,618	\$192,250
Disbursements	\$166,659	\$188,376

5 YEAR CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

2007 Results through October

Pledged	\$29,833
Received	\$18,890



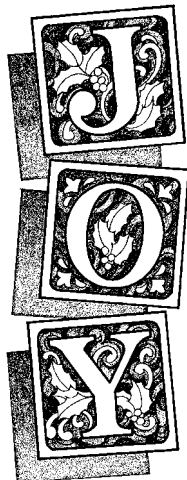
Thank you for your contribution to the ministries of St. Luke Union Church.

Roll Out the Green Carpet!

Doesn't the new carpet in the Sanctuary look wonderful?

An additional \$6,208.12 is still needed for the Carpet Campaign to carpet Fellowship Hall and the outer office.

Joy/Christmas Fund Offering



On December 23rd, we will be collecting the Joy offering.

That is the Presbyterian (USA) name and the United Church of Christ calls it the Christmas Fund offering.

We have traditionally called it the Joy offering. We divide it equally between both denominations.

This offering is used to help to supplement pensions and health

premiums for low-income clergy and church workers or for those facing a financial need or emergency.

It is also used to help support racial ethnic schools and colleges. In addition, it enables hundreds of retirees to receive Christmas gift checks.

This is our opportunity to help those who have served us so faithfully in the past.

Please prayerfully consider how you can contribute to this special offering on December 23rd.

You should receive an envelope labeled for the Christmas Fund with this issue of New Directions.

Additional envelopes marked either for the Christmas Fund or the Joy offering will be available in the pews for your use.

Thank you.

Home Bible Class

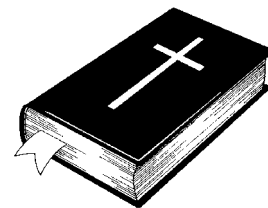
The Home Bible Class will meet Thursday, December 13th, at the home of Pastor Beth Wagner, 1715 West Hovey Ave., Normal.

All women are invited. Please bring a Christmas

reading and Christmas cookies to share.

A "Love Gift" will be collected, as well as our special giving to the Donna Thomas project.

If anyone needs a ride, call Dottie Metcalf at 662-3734.



Elisabeth von Trapp Christmas Concert

Elisabeth von Trapp was born to a rich musical heritage. Granddaughter of the legendary Maria and Baron von Trapp, whose story inspired The Sound of Music, Elisabeth has carried on the legacy of the internationally renowned

Trapp Family Singers. Singing professionally since childhood, Elisabeth has performed all over the world, enchanting audiences from European cathedrals to the Kennedy Center. For more information, call 827-6121.

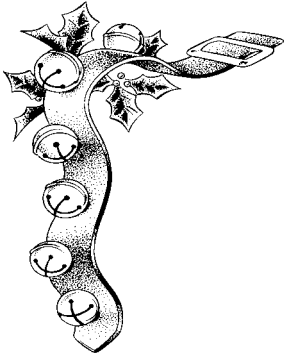
December 13, 2007
7:30 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran Church
1617 East Emerson
Bloomington, IL

Tickets: \$20.00

www.stjohnsbloomington.org

Healthy Congregation Update



Our Healthy Congregation sessions with Norma Roberts are winding down.

She's met with small groups, she's completed her 20 individual sessions with members of the congregation, she's led us in worship, she's attended the Omega group and now she is ready to give us a summary of her findings and will suggest an action

plan that will coordinate with the Mission Study Task Force that is being led by John Otto.

Norma will be holding a session on December 2nd after worship to share her preliminary report with us.

She would like as many of us to attend as possible.

A light lunch will be served

by the Healthy Congregation Task Force.

Please plan on joining us that day.

Your input and questions are vital to the formation of the pastoral search committee.

Thank You

New Wheels for Kevin –

Thank you again to everyone in the congregation who helped in any way to make our fundraiser such a success.

Our congregation and so many other people from the community pulled together for such a positive benefit and an outstanding experience.

To date \$37,175.83 has been raised.

We all look forward to seeing Kevin's "New Wheels."

Thank you to my intrepid committee:

Claire Benjamin, Ruth Trower, Yvonne Harrison, Marian Harris, Charlene Beringer, Pat Parmenter, Lin Walton, Beth Wagner, Evelyne Thomas and Linda Sellberg joined by family members Jessie Cavitt, Rebecca and Kevin Schaefer

Special thanks to Doug and Sanae Ferrier who chaired the children's table, Terry Small and her committee of money wranglers and Karen Collier for accompaniment.

Laurie Vial, Chair



Advent Season

Advent season is upon us and we have several events to celebrate the season.

On December 2 we will have an Advent “party” for the Garden kids.

Planned for the day is decorating the Garden area for Christmas, making Advent calendars, as well as making Christmas cookies.

The adults will be starting a study called, “Pausing on the Road to Bethlehem,” which will be led by various members of the

adult class.



It is a wonderful study, so everyone plan to come and learn about God’s plan for

us during this season.

Wednesday night study is “Living the Questions,” led by Pastor Beth.

I am told there are some stimulating and interesting conversations. Joining in the middle of the study is not a problem, so I hope everyone will attend.

New things are planned for 2008, so keep your eyes and ears open!!

Kathy Otto

Council News



Request for Annual Reports for all Ministry Teams and taskforces are due January 3rd.

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be on January 27th, 2008.

New money counting procedures are being implemented for small groups and fundraisers. Please check in the office and the kitchen for the forms and envelopes.

Final review and subsequent changes of the new constitution were made and will be mailed to

the congregation for examination.

A vote on the new document will be held at the annual meeting.

Ministry Teams presented their budgets for 2008.

Added a fourth goal for our congregation to

- Support local, national and global missions, along with
- Attracting new members and families,
- Growth in Bible Study

and Spiritual gifts, and

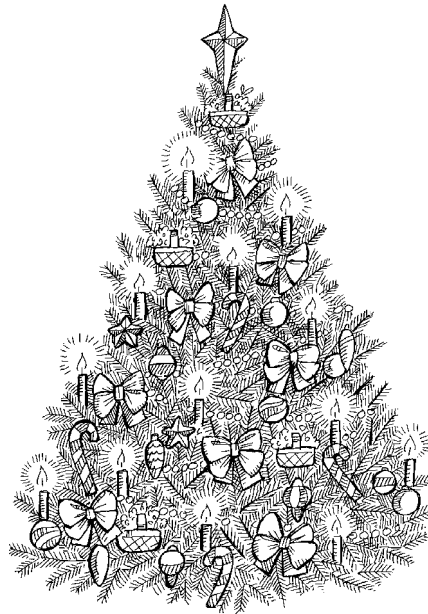
- Make facility improvements.

Women's Fellowship Christmas Dinner

The Women's Fellowship Christmas potluck dinner and program will be Monday, December 10th at 6:00 p.m.

Drinks and table service will be provided.

There will also be a brief business meeting which will include Installation of Officers, 2008 Budget and By-laws Approval.



Copies of the Women's Fellowship By-laws with proposed addition will be available at the church November 25th and December 2nd.

If you would like a copy of these mailed to you, please contact Karlene Bledsoe at 823-8868.

Celebrating 
An Anniversary This Month

Gary and Karen Wester - Dec 13th
Dave and Katherine Hurst - Dec 30th

NOTE:

There will be no "You've Gotta Eat!" in December. We will be back in January with a Chili Supper.

Thank You

What a blessing you all are at St. Luke Union Church!

Thank you to all that sent cards, prayers and especially to the ones who were kind enough to give me rides for over a year.

Also thank you to all the women who served such a nice luncheon after Pete's funeral.

Thank you to Pastor Beth Wagner who was so kind and good.

Thank you all so very much for everything.

Your kindness will always live in my heart.

Leanna Peters and Family

From the **PASTOR**—



Blessings from Beth -

Pausing on the Road to Bethlehem

Each year God's people set aside four weeks to prepare for the "Feast of Christ" called Christmas.

As the days of December darken towards the winter solstice, Christians light candles of Advent and wait with quiet expectation for God's light to be born anew in their hearts.

This year as we pause on the road to Bethlehem I invite you to listen to the voices of Advent . . . the voices of Isaiah, John the Baptist and Mary.

I hope they will remind you that good feelings, nice presents, beloved carols, even beautiful worship services and many acts of thoughtfulness are not the real heart of Christmas.

Christmas is saying "Yes" to something beyond all the pageantry and feelings.

Christmas is saying "Yes" as Mary did, to a hope based on the miracle of God's initiative to enter our life as the Christ Child, offering God's grace and forgiveness.

I hope that each of you will find time during this very busy season to pause and listen to God... making room in your heart to again say "Yes" to the amazing miracle that happened over two thousand years ago in the small town of Bethlehem in a simple manger.

I hope you will find time to pause again and say "Yes" to God and think about all the things we do during this holiday season.

One of the ways to pause is to think about what each act of the holiday means such as the lighting of the Christmas tree.

I have enclosed a wonderful prayer as one way to pause.

Blessings,

Pastor Beth

A PRAYER OF THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

We praise you Lord as we dedicate this tree.

May it be for us a sign of your presence in our home.

May the color, *ever green*, remind us that your love is forever.

May each needle be a prayer of thanks for your goodness.

May the star atop lead us to the manger where we can bring our gifts of repentance and caring.

Help us to celebrate with joy and thanksgiving the birth of the One whom this tree honors. Amen.

*by Richard Coleman for
Creative Communication for the
Parish 1990*

Office Volunteers

Thank you to our wonderful office volunteers who answer the phone and help with mailings or whatever needs to be done!!!

They allow us to employ a part-time Administrative Assistant.

It takes 10 people a week to fill the shifts.

Several volunteers are heading South for a while and one is on medical leave.

Please consider helping out

in this key area - absolutely no special skills required.

There can be some quiet



time so bring a book or something to do from home.

Please - we don't want to reduce our office hours.

See Evelyne Thomas for more information.

Bob and I would like to thank the Women's Fellowship ladies for preparing and serving the delicious food for our 55th Anniversary Celebration.

Thank you so much.

Bob and Jane Little

Adopt-A-Family (continued)

Household items needed:

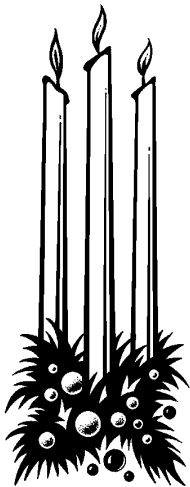
King size sheets
King size blanket
Pillows
Bath towels
Wash cloths
Dishes
Silverware
Kitchen knives
Kitchen utensils

Items need to be new and unwrapped although being

in boxes would be helpful, but not necessary.

Contributions need to be returned to the church on or before Sunday, December 9th.

Any questions or concerns, please see Marsha Hinthorn.



News From Our Moderator

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from the Council!

As the busy season comes upon us, we would like to wish you all safe travel, good health and the joy that comes with the celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our new red carpeting in the sanctuary is here just in time to coordinate with the festive holiday colors!

I would like to give a heartfelt thanks to the Resource Ministry Team, the Carpet Task Force, the prep team and those who helped put the sanctuary back in place in time for Sunday worship.

You did a great job. And thanks to those of you who have donated to make this project become a reality.

Now, on to the Fellowship Hall and the office! We're almost there.

Many of you have asked me when the pastoral search committee will begin.

I would say we are 75 to 80 per cent on our way.

Our Healthy Congregation sessions with Norma Roberts are winding down.



She's met with small groups, she's completed her 20 individual sessions with members of the congregation, she's led us in worship, she's attended the Omega group and now she is ready to give us a summary of her findings.

Now she will suggest an action plan that will coordinate with the Mission Study Task Force that is being led by John Otto.

John says his group should be finished with their findings in January.

Norma will be holding a session on December 2nd after worship to share with

us her preliminary report.

She would like as many of us to attend as possible. A light lunch will be served by the Healthy Congregation Task Force.

Please plan on joining us that day.

Your input and questions are vital to the formation of the pastoral search committee.

Many thanks to the Constitution Task Force for their hard work to present to council a newly revised constitution, which will be voted on in January by the congregation.

Thank-you to Jan Paterson, Dan Staver and Bill Walters.

In Christ's Love,

Ruth Trower

New Wheels For Kevin Fundraiser



New Wheels For Kevin Fundraiser



10/27/2007 08:07 pm



10/27/2007 08:06 pm



Fall Rally Roundup Day



Fall Rally Roundup Day



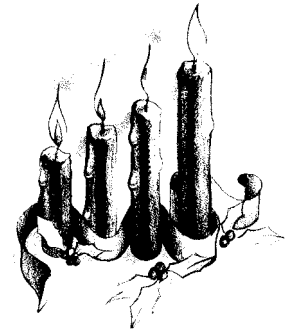
Thank You

Thank you to Lisa DeBruine and Marsha Hinthorn for seamlessly filling in as organist and accompanist the last couple of months.

We DO appreciate your musical talents.

Also thanks to Jeff DeBruine for helping select special music during this time and Priscilla Harper for directing.

Worship Chorale - thanks for hanging in there during this time of transition.



Welcome to David Sulzberger



We welcome David Sulzberger this morning as he assumes the roles of Organist/Accompanist and Choir Director.

In the spring David will also become our Bell Choir Director as we reorganize that group.

He has a Master's in Music Education from University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls and a Bachelor of

Music Degree in piano performance from University of Iowa, Iowa City as well as other advanced education in music.

David hails from Muscatine, Iowa.

He is also Director of Sixth through Eighth Grade Chorus and Bands, Assistant Fifth Grade and High School Band at

Illinois State University, Metcalf and University High School Lab Schools.

Golden Compass

I generally don't comment on movies within the secular market but I have to share some concerns about a movie being released in December called *Golden Compass*.

This movie is based on a series of books that carry anti-religious themes.

Written by Phillip Pullman, a proud atheist, this movie has been simplified in hopes that families will buy the trilogy where children kill God and so they can do as they please.

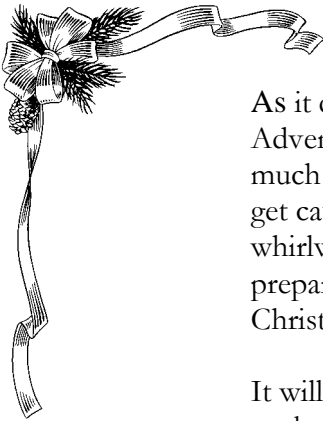
Please be prepared to talk with your children if you decide to see this movie.

It is full of very dark images and thoughts.

Pastor Beth



Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study



As it does every year, Advent comes upon us much too quickly, and we get caught up in the whirlwind of activities and preparations that lead to Christmas.

It will be January before we know what hit us.

We will have rushed through another Advent, hardly stopping to take a breath and wonder at the good news of Emmanuel, “God with us.”

Our Sunday school this year is designed for those who want to slow down and sink into the Advent season.

It is inspirational and devotional in nature, an experiential Advent-ure through the weeks of Advent.

During these five sessions we will utilize music, art, poetry, and a variety of interactive activities centered on biblical passages that connect to Advent.

Each week will include:

- A Bible passage that relates to Advent;
- Time for guided prayer using a unique format each week;
- Thoughtful reflection on music, art, and

poetry;

- Guided meditation;
- Suggestions for continuing the Advent-ure during the week.


This Advent-ure isn’t for everyone.

It is for those who want to immerse themselves in the season of Advent, to journey through this season at a mindful pace.

We will walk with Mary and Joseph on the road to Bethlehem, taking time to “ponder these things in our heart.”

December SNAC Youth Schedule

- December 2nd, 2007
Cookie Jar Fundraising Project
- December 9th, 2007
Amazing Bible Race
- December 16th, 2007
Amazing Bible Race
- December 23rd, 2007
Christmas Break (No SNAC)
- December 30th, 2007
Christmas Break (No SNAC)


BEHOLD,
 I bring you
 tidings
 —of—
GREAT JOY!

St. Luke Union Church

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