



NEWSLETTER

December
2013

I Need More...JOY

“But the angel said to them, ‘... I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you.’” (Luke 2:10-11)



After hastily opening the wrapped package and making the obligatory thank yous, it certainly didn't take long to turn away from the thoughtful gift as something ho hum.

Just then three year old Eleanor came along and stopping by the discarded item exclaimed, "Oh, my, what a beautiful gift! Is that yours? You must be so happy?" As she walked away I thought to myself, "Why don't I have the joy of that little girl?"

At times we have those feelings which cause us to cry out, "I need more joy in my life!" That is so often true at this time of year when for one reason or another we find ourselves lacking joy. There are indications everywhere that joy should fill our lives. Decorations are going up inside and outside. Christmas music surrounds us and cards are arriving daily.

Some days the festive joy fills our hearts as we excitedly go about our holiday shopping and schedule planning. But yet deep down we know that this joy will not last. Planning becomes

overwhelming, schedules start falling apart and decorating gets tiresome. Above all, we know from experience, there will be no joy when we find we don't have enough money to purchase the perfect gift or when credit card payments come due. All of this leads us to shout out, "I need more joy! I need joy that will last!"

Here's some great news. Christmas brings us joy that does last—the true joy found in Jesus.

With a love that we cannot comprehend, our heavenly Father gave his only Son, born to be our Savior. With perfect obedience Jesus lived the life all of us are unable to live. Each and every evil thought, evil word and evil deed we have done has been picked from us by our heavenly Father and placed on Jesus. On Calvary's cross, Jesus bowed his head in death declaring, "It is finished." These words of Jesus bring us true joy. They mean that all is done and Easter's announcement "He Is Risen!" guarantees that God our Father has accepted Jesus' life and death as payment in full for all our sins. True joy is the forgiveness of sins that is ours through faith in Jesus.

While we are in the midst of the season when it seems hard to keep joy in our lives, focus on the true Joy Giver. Ponder again the words of the angels to the shepherds, *“Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born. He is Christ the Lord.”* (Luke 2:11) Come and worship the Babe born in Bethlehem, and may God the Holy Spirit fill you with a joy that never ends.

CHURCH NEWS

Christmas Caroling!! We are planning to go Christmas caroling on Saturday, December 7th. All members are invited to join and spread the story and spirit of Christmas through song. Schedules of the caroling itinerary are available in the narthex. If you have any questions or would like additional information, you may speak with Lonnie Rabe or Pastor Reichow.

Christmas Program with Jesus Cares: We will be celebrating Christmas with a special program of songs and narration entitled, *The Many Shapes Of Christmas* performed by the Jesus Cares members on Thursday, December 12th here at church. All St. John's members and families are invited to attend this great opportunity and to experience the Christmas story in a unique way. Jesus Cares participants will be arriving between 6:15 – 6:30pm to prepare for their program. Their program in the sanctuary will begin approximately at **7:00pm**. Treats will be served afterwards for those in attendance. We hope to see you there!

Christmas Eve Program Practice will be held the first 4 Sundays in December in connection with Sunday School. The children will be practicing until noon each week. Parents please take note of this time extension. Thanks for your cooperation in making this program a success.

Directory Updates: If your address or phone number has changed over the past year, please contact Ruth Lange or Carol Dammann before the printing of the 2014 directory.

A Good Way To Search: WELS Internet surfers have searched their way to thousands of dollars for the synod using the GoodSearch Internet search engine. By looking for the latest gadget or news, you can donate about one cent per query to WELS or the charity of your choice by using GoodSearch. The donations are put towards the synod's general operating fund. It's easy to use. Simply go to www.goodsearch.com and select WELS, your local church or school, or another favorite charity, and every time you submit a search query, a donation is made, about one penny at a time.

LADIES AID

St. John's Ladies Aid is sponsoring a Christmas party on Sunday, December 1st beginning at 12:30pm. All church members, relatives and friends are cordially invited to the catered dinner.

The cost of the meal is \$9.00 per person to be made payable to St. John's Ladies Aid. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex for all who wish to come to the party. Please bring an item for the food shelf and also a donation for the Belle Plaine Lutheran Home.

The Ladies Aid has Christmas cards and napkins for sale. Check out the selection on the table in the narthex. Your support to our ladies group is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

We are continuing to collect Campbell soup labels, Box Tops and Top Care / Food Club points for various groups to be used as fund raisers. Collection containers for these items are on the table in the meeting room.

YOUTH NEWS

In November, Youth Group members enjoyed the musical, **"Into The Woods"** at MLC in New Ulm! Many of our youth have expressed a desire to have a fun swimming event again at the Water Park of America. So, we are encouraging all our youth members to participate at our Christmas party where we will make plans for this event.

We are planning to have the Christmas party here at church on Sunday, December 15th beginning at 4:00pm. We will have a meal, fun games, gift exchange and talk about future plans. If youth members want to be a part of the gift exchange (bunco dice game), please bring two wrapped gifts equaling a total value of \$5. Youth members are welcome to invite as many friends as they would like. If these friends want to participate in the gift exchange, have them bring two gifts as per the above instructions. See you there for a fun time!

Birthdays & Anniversaries

2 nd	Leonard Lange
4 th	Richard Gorr
6 th	Diane Dittmer
7 th	Tim and Janet Schuth (22 nd Anniversary)
10 th	Tanya Reichow and Cindy Schuth
12 th	Jaime Mathwig
14 th	Brock Warren
15 th	Betty Gorr
23 rd	James Dammann and Dylan Schuth
24 th	Melanie Schmidt and Benjamin Goette
26 th	Jason Gorr Mike and Jessica Wills (6 th Anniversary)
29 th	Emily Rabe,
30 th	Darlene Mackenthun and Kaitlyn Scherer
31 st	Mavis Lange