

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH (HELEN TWP.)

NEWSLETTER

December
2008

A Short Story that Speaks Volumes for Our Lives

The Perfect Pearl

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:45, 46).



Have you found the perfect Christmas gift for that special someone yet? If so, what makes it perfect? Is it perfect because it's unique, like handcrafted pottery? Is it perfect because it fits the personality of the individual for whom you bought it, like a plaid shirt for the lumberjack in your family?

What if you find the perfect gift only to discover that it's beyond your budget? Would you sell your car, your house, everything you own to obtain THE perfect gift?

Jesus once told a parable about a pearl-dealer whose goal was to find the perfect pearl. When he found it, he sold all that he owned so he could buy his treasured find.

The perfect pearl represents the message of salvation found in the Bible. This message is perfect because it tells us everything we need to know for this life and the next. The Bible tells us that all have sinned and deserve God's eternal punishment in hell. But the Bible also says that Jesus came to take that punishment – like your next-door neighbor paying for the fire damage that *your* hastily strung Christmas lights did to *her* house. Because of Jesus our sins are paid for and forgiven!

This message is not only perfect; it's one of a kind. There are plenty of places you can look for the answers to life's questions, but the only place you'll find the perfect pearl is in the Bible. We would be glad to share with you the treasure that God has for us in his Word. The Bible appears to be like any other book, but within there is a precious message that exceeds everything we've known. It's like the person who pries open a dull clamshell and finds a glowing pearl nestled within that's worth more than any other.

A pearl in a clamshell! That's often how God works. He comes to us in unlikely places to give us his love. Could that be illustrated any more beautifully than it is at Christmas? At Christmas, the Son of God, our Savior, was born ... in a barn! And then this Jesus willingly gave up his life on the cross to pay for our sins and win us a place in heaven. This message is God's priceless, perfect gift for us!

CHURCH NEWS

Christmas Caroling!! All members of the congregation are invited to join in Christmas caroling on Saturday, December 6th. We will meet at church at 8:30 am and continue throughout the day visiting our shut-ins with holiday songs. The day will conclude around 3:30 pm. (A complete itinerary is posted in the narthex). If you can't join us for the whole day, join in whenever you can! Any questions, speak to Lonnie Rabe.

Ladies Aid Christmas Party: The Ladies Aid is sponsoring a Christmas Party on Sunday, December 7, 2008 at 12:30 P.M. All church members, relatives and friends are cordially invited to come and enjoy a good meal. The cost of the meal is \$8.00 per person to be made payable to St. John's Ladies Aid and given to Carolyn Lange. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex for all who wish to come to the party.

Jesus Cares Bible Class We continue our ministry to people with developmental disabilities. Bible class is scheduled at the community room in Glencoe on Thursday, December 11th at 6:30PM. Members of the congregation are welcome to come and join us.

Christmas Eve Program Practice will be held Sundays after church from 11:15am to 12:30. Parents please take note of this time extension. Thanks for your cooperation in making this program a success.

Christmas Cards: 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.

Directory Updates: If your address or phone number has changed over the past year, please contact Ruth Lange or Pastor Reichow before the printing of the 2009 directory.

Continuing to collect: Campbell soup labels, Top Care and Food Club bar codes are still being collected for various groups to be used for fund raisers. Used greeting card fronts are also being collected for a group in Arlington who recycles them. Collection containers for these items are in the narthex in the greeting card display area.

Wanted: The Altar and Flower Committees are looking for volunteers. The Altar committee is responsible for covering the altar each Sunday and changing the altar cloths according to the church year. The Flower committee cares for flowers from funerals, anniversaries, special occasions, etc. by watering them and placing them in the sanctuary. The more ladies that are involved, the fewer times you are placed in the rotation. Any questions can be answered by Ruth Lange.

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YOUTH NEWS

The Youth Group will be baking for shut-ins beginning at 3:00pm Saturday, December 6th with their Christmas party following at 5:30pm. Bring a gender neutral wrapped gift to exchange. Friends are always welcome. We will also be collecting non-perishable food items for the food shelf collection. The Youth Group wishes to thank everyone that ordered butterbraids. Your orders will be available the first part of December for pick up. If you have any questions, you may speak with Alex Siewert or Gene Roush.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

2 nd	Leonard Lange
4 th	Richard Gorr
6 th	Diane Dittmer
7 th	Tim and Janet Schuth (17 th Anniversary)
8 th	Nathan Gorr
10 th	Tanya Reichow and Cindy Schuth
12 th	Jaime Mathwig
13 th	Orvilla Dammann
14 th	Brock Warren
15 th	Betty Gorr
21 st	Norman and Nora Albers (54 th Anniversary)
23 rd	James Dammann and Dylan Schuth
24 th	Melanie Schmidt and Benjamin Goette
26 th	Jason Gorr
29 th	Emily Rabe
30 th	Darlene Mackenthun and Kaitlyn Scherer
31 st	Mavis Lange