

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

# NEWSLETTER

December  
2011

---

---

## Christmas - God's Gift to You

*When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.*

*Galatians 4:4-5*



It's the moment for which children wait so excitedly: the time for tearing open Christmas presents. It's thrilling to see their excitement and joy to find out what lies beneath the bow and paper. But often, just as quickly as the excitement erupted, it begins to disappear. When the flying bows and paper settle, feelings of disappointment and ingratitude so often start to surface. The moment everyone so eagerly looked forward to so soon ends up becoming yet another disappointment.

For so many, the Christmas season and celebration ends up like the boxes strewn across the floor—empty. Christmas is about giving and receiving gifts, but its focus is not on the gifts and presents placed under a tree. The focus of Christmas is a

baby who is God in human flesh placed in a manger.

Christmas is the celebration of the gift of God's one and only Son, a gift he gave to the world. It's the gift that I need, that you need, that this whole world needs. You see, this world—including you and me—is wrapped and covered in sin. It's this covering of sin that leaves us empty and disappointed and looking for more gifts and other presents that we hope will fill the void. But they can't.

It is only through the gift of God's Son, and his life and death that removes from you the ugly covering and wrapping of your sins. Jesus did not come to be placed under a Christmas tree, but to hang upon a tree, not as an ornament, but as the one who would die upon it to pay for all of your sins. His perfect, innocent life and death are gifts he offers to you to make you his perfect and holy child and heir of heaven.

Christmas is so much more than presents placed beneath a tree. It's the sure and certain fulfillment of God's most treasured gift to you, your Savior from sin, Jesus Christ. It's a gift we want to share with you. It's a gift we want to enjoy with you this season and all year long.

## CHURCH NEWS

**Congregational Information Meeting** All confirmed congregation members are invited to participate in an informational meeting after worship on Nov 27<sup>th</sup>. We will be discussing a proposed update to our church constitution and a change in our leadership structure. Then, we are planning to have another meeting on **Dec 11<sup>th</sup>** after worship to discuss further any items with this proposal and have a vote.

**Christmas Caroling!!** We are planning to go Christmas caroling on Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. All members are invited to join and spread the story and spirit of Christmas through song. If you have any questions or would like additional information, you may speak with Pastor Reichow or Lonnie Rabe

**Christmas Program with Jesus Cares:** We will be celebrating Christmas with a special program of singing and a Christmas greetings performed by the Jesus Cares members on Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> here at church. All St. John's members and families are invited to attend this great opportunity and 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. Bars and refreshments will be available for those planning to attend. We hope to see you there!

**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 2012 directory.

**A Good Way To Search:** WELS Internet surfers have searched their way to nearly \$8500 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](http://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. GoodSearch receives its funding through advertising on the site, but rather than bank large profits, the founders decided to give back.

## LADIES AID

St. John's Ladies Aid is sponsoring a Christmas party on Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup> beginning at 12:00 pm. All church members, relatives and friends are cordially invited to the catered dinner. The cost of the meal is \$8.00 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 and Top Care / Food Club points 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.

\* \* \* \* \*

## YOUTH NEWS

Thank you to everyone who helped sell and / or purchased pies through Carlson Orchard. Your help and support is greatly appreciated!

The Youth Group will be having their Christmas party here at church on December 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm.

### *Birthdays & Anniversaries*

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Leonard Lange
4 <sup>th</sup>	Richard Gorr
6 <sup>th</sup>	Diane Dittmer
7 <sup>th</sup>	Tim and Janet Schuth (20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary)
8 <sup>th</sup>	Nathan Gorr
10 <sup>th</sup>	Tanya Reichow and Cindy Schuth
12 <sup>th</sup>	Jaime Mathwig
14 <sup>th</sup>	Brock Warren
15 <sup>th</sup>	Betty Gorr
23 <sup>rd</sup>	James Dammann and Dylan Schuth
24 <sup>th</sup>	Melanie Schmidt and Benjamin Goette
26 <sup>th</sup>	Jason Gorr
29 <sup>th</sup>	Emily Rabe, Mike and Ashley Schultz (4 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary)
30 <sup>th</sup>	Darlene Mackenthun and Kaitlyn Scherer
31 <sup>st</sup>	Mavis Lange