

Crossings

"Making known
God's deeds
among us."
Isaiah 12:4

Volume 10 Issue 12

December 2015

Pastor's Epistle

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As I write this the world is reeling from several terrorist attacks, including Beirut, Nigeria and Paris, among others. Refugees by the 10's of thousands are risking life and limb, to flee from the violence. They flee to countries which do not have adequate facilities and resources to tend to their needs nor process their requests for asylum. The world is in an uproar and we react with fear and calls to close our borders to Syrians and others seeking freedom from fear and want. Please know that I also ask these same questions, "Where is Christ in all of this? What guidance does our Lord provide? As a Christian, how am I to respond?"

As we approach Christ the King Sunday followed by the seasons of Advent and Christmas, it may be wise to prayerfully consider who Jesus Christ is for the Christian. The King of the Universe was birthed in a cave-like stable to a poor Nazarene carpenter and a young teenage girl. They became refugees, because Herod was killing all boys 2yrs of age and younger (a terrorist act), and they fled to Egypt where they remained until Herod died. This poor boy child grew up in an orthodox religious practice under the very oppressive Roman rule used slavery, violence, and crucifixion as common methods to control the Jewish nation. He probably witnessed a couple of crucifixions during his upbringing as well as people being yanked out of their houses and sold into slavery never to return.

During his ministry he confronted not only the religious establishment of his time (the Temple), but also the Roman way of life. He did this by preaching a Gospel of love; a Gospel which showed that forgiveness is life-giving, life-renewing even in the midst of great oppression. He preached that the kingdom of God exists within people and calls for a reversal of how we engage oppression:

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful"

(Luke 6.32-36).

Again, when asked what are the greatest commandments, Jesus replied, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two rest all the law and the prophets". (Mat 22.37-40). You and I know that Jesus considers everyone, including our enemies, to be our neighbor (Luke 10.29-37).

Our Mission Statement

*Called by Christ to love
God & neighbor
through **deepening prayer,**
broadening fellowship,
and **expanding worship.***

"In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loves us so much, we also ought to love one another."

1 John 4:10-11

To show us this Godly love, Jesus went to the cross for all people who are enemies of God (all humanity, including "good Christian" and evildoers). From the cross, he looked out across the crowds mocking him, the centurions at his feet who cast lots for his clothes, as well as those folk who hammered the nails into his body on the cross, and he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23.34).

This current time of anxiety and fear can cause us to react with our base instinct – to build walls, to let fear run amok, to choose to flee or stay and fight. But as people who have been baptized, we have been baptized into the death of Christ and already raised to new life *in* Christ (Romans 6). We live embodied by the Spirit of Christ for good works, which includes loving our enemies. As Christians we are called to love fearlessly, for "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. . . There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4. 16b-19).

This Godly love is not a love of emotion, but of will. Loving our enemies in this way is not possible by our own efforts because we live in the tension of being simultaneously both saint and sinner. We belong to a God who does not leave us desolate, but empowers us to love by God's gracious Spirit. Let us prayerfully consider our response to this violence in the world. Ask God to help us to respond with compassion for the men, women, and children who risk everything to flee from the perpetrators of this evil. Pray for global and local leaders to act with thoughtful compassion to keep all people safe – the refugees and the countries who take them in.

Advent and Christmas remind us that God in Christ is coming soon. The God of the refugee is also the God of the evildoers, and the cross of Christ is rises in the midst of it all. May God bless us with the powerful Spirit of love, the words of hope, the compassion of Godly peace, and the ultimate joy of God's presence.

Walking with you along the WAY – Pr. Nancy



Salvation Army Bell Ringers!!

St. Paul's will be ringing bells on **Saturday, December 5 from 9 am -6 pm** in one hour shifts at **Jim & Charlie's**. Still on spot to fill the 2-3 pm. Please sign-up if you are able.

Ninety percent (90%) of funds raised remain in Monroe County/Albia to be disbursed through the Albia Ministerial Emergency Assistance fund.



Building Faith Through Family Home Huddles **(BF-T-FHH)**

On Sunday December 6th we will be having our monthly inter-generational missions project. This month we will be making ornaments for the residence of Brees Rest Home. We will start after worship about 10:30 am. Everyone can help and interact with our children in our congregation.



St. Paul's Shut-ins:
Bob & Ruth Johnson

**Education/
Prayer Team**

RECENT PRAYERS

Jenni Beckwith
Carrie Bergland
Mary Carder
Gail Connerly
Ray Hopkins
Frank Hunter
Linda Ulrich Johnson
Loraine Jordan
Martha McGlothen
Karen Moon
June Morrison
Rosealee Rhodes
Ella Teno

(2014)

Opal Bloomer
Vickie Buckingham
Addie Fausett
Sharon Glenn
Nick Griffin
Gary Hollst
Alyson Karl
Richard McDonough
Pat Mason
Deloris Perry
Gary Perry
Amy Pottorff
Dr. MARRIDEE RANDALL
Carol (Keegle) Reed
Devin Sinclair
Paulette Williams

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Continuing Prayers

Alex Amante
Kevin Bunch
Brantley Hemann
Loren Lettington
Laura Moore
Rhonda Morgan
Trisha Raven
Bert Whitlock

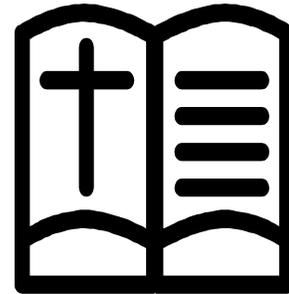
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WELCA Bible Study
Special Day & Time: Thurs. Dec. 10 at
2 pm (between soup lunch & supper)

Slow Faith

Session 3: Tempo giusto –means “play at the right speed”; in this session we will look to Jesus for a third way, one that keeps the Sabbath rest while working steadily for change in 3 of his parables.

In Sympathy: Our sympathy goes out to the family and friends of Josephine Lindberg who died on November 21. May they be comforted with the sure and certain hope of the resurrection.



Christmas Program Practice

Only 2 more practices before our program.

NEW TIME: 5:00—6:30 pm on Weds. Dec. 2 and Dec. 9 so we can practice before the Advent Service

Christmas Program will be on December 13 during Sunday Worship.



Fellowship Team Ministries

Sunday Brunch



December 20



Birthdays

1. Matthew Johnson
1. Curtis Kelley
1. Olivia Sherman
4. Bernice Butler
6. Cyndi Duea
10. Whitney Mae Thomas
11. Brandon Tomlin
12. Eric Duea
18. Brittany (Sparks) Flattery
25. Sharon Peterson
30. Karen Niebuhr
31. Broderick (Brody) Thomas
31. Donna Post

Special Thank you to
Marilyn Johnson, Colleen Putnam, Karen Niebuhr, Evelyn Sharpe & Marilyn Woods for serving at the Remembrance service and the Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship.

Senior Fellowship

Pot-luck Luncheon: On Wednesday, Dec. 2nd at 11:00 am we will have our Christmas potluck and gift exchange. Please bring a wrapped (about \$5.00) item or a white elephant item is okay.



WELCA

Annual Christmas Tea/Coffee Party: Come join us on Sunday, Dec. 13 at 2:00 pm. Advent Angels will be revealed. Bring a wrapped gift (\$5-7.00) to exchange with those who did not participate in Advent Angels. All St. Paul's women are invited and you can bring a friend to join in the fun and fellowship. (No Cookie Exchange this year.)

WELCA Bible Study: Thurs. Dec. 10 at 2 pm.

(See more info on pg 3)

Advent Angels: See below.

Soup Lunch and Supper will be Dec. 10 this year. Lunch 11 am-1 pm and Supper from 5—7 pm.

Candy dipping workshop will be on Mon. Dec. 7 and candy packaging on Dec. 8 at 6 pm.

Please sign-up where ever you can help.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Baptismal Birthdays

3. Kaitlyn Spieler
20. Matthew Johnson
22. Cody Simmons
23. Dakota Kelley
23. Grayson Kelley
23. Stephanie Kelley
23. Brandon Tomlin
24. Bernice Butler



Anniversaries

17. Dan & Pat Johnson
25. Daryl & Bernice Butler
27. Greg & Jani Dorpinghaus
30. Terry & Anita Simmons

Advent Angels



Remember your special person on Nov. 29, Dec. 6, Dec. 13 with a gift. We will open the gifts after Sun. worship. On the Dec. 13 at our Christmas Tea bring your final gift and reveal who's Advent Angel you are. Total budget for all 3 gifts is \$20.00.



MISSIONS TASK FORCE

Missions Meeting: Sunday Dec. 13 at 10:30 am. We will be wrapping the family gifts and getting them ready for delivery.

ON-GOING Mission for the Assistant Emergency Office Needs:

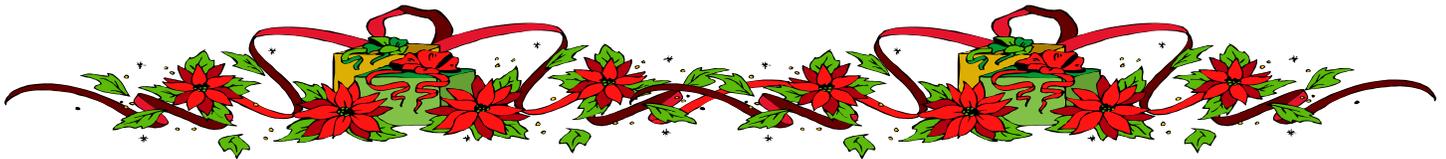
The shelves at our Ministerial Association Emergency Assistance Office are nearly empty. We have special need for items which cannot be obtained by food stamps:

Personal hygiene for men and women: deodorants, bath soap, body wash, toothpaste, shampoo, etc.

Paper products: bathroom tissue, etc.

Baby products: diapers, etc.

Cleaning items: **laundry detergent**, dish soap, any cleaning products.



ADVENT MISSION: Poinsettia Project

Poinsettias are wonderful, but wouldn't it be great if they kept on living? That can happen by choosing a poinsettia that the Missions committee provides. Instead of or in addition to buying a real poinsettia plant, you can use those same funds to buy ducklings or chicks for a family in a third world country through the **ELCA Global Barnyard**; donate to **Smile Train** for surgery to fix a cleft lip and palate; or donate to **Habitat For Humanity** where they change lives by helping them build homes. (This part of the project will end on December 27th.) Here's how it works:

PART A: Each **small** poinsettia comes with a gift tag.

1. On the front of the tag, check one or more of the 3 selections offered. (If choosing more than one, tell us how much money goes to each entity).
2. Then at the bottom, write the name of the person for whom you are memorializing or honoring. Also write on the tag what you want us to purchase from the ELCA Global Barnyard, chicks, goat, etc.
3. Put the card and check in the envelope provided, and deposit them in the Mission's Christmas wrapped box. The missions committee will keep track of the money and send it to the appropriate entity per your instructions.
4. Return the poinsettia to the box/basket provided and we will decorate the Christmas tree with them. (or you can put the poinsettia on the tree yourself.)

PART B: Secret Adopt a Family for Christmas **Large Poinsettia mission.** We have two families wish/gift ideas that are on gift tags under the poinsettias. You have the options of giving a present for one or multiple members of either family. Please be sure to return the purchased gift with the tag attached. (*You may want to also attach a gift receipt in case of items not the right size.*)

The family gifts need to be wrapped and returned to the church no later than **Sunday, December 13th.** (*If you do not have time to wrap your item; we will do it after worship on the 13th.*)

Please sign the sheet on the clip board if you want to give your gift in Memory/or in Honor of someone.

Worship Team Ministries



Sunday Worship
9:00 am



CHOIR

Dec. 6 Practice 8:15 am
Dec. 13 Practice 8:15 an
Dec. 20 Practice 8:15 am
Dec. 27 NO Practice

Worship Servers

Altar Guild: Gloria Smallwood

<u>Dec. 6</u>	Worship Assistant:	Gail Clouse
	Ushers/Greeters:	Charlie & Gloria Smallwood
	Lector:	Gail Clouse
<u>Dec. 13</u>	Worship Assistant:	Marilyn Woods
	Ushers/Greeters:	Charlie & Gloria Smallwood
	Lector:	Gloria Smallwood
<u>Dec. 20</u>	Worship Assistant:	Marilyn Woods
	Ushers/Greeters:	Richard & Ruth James
	Lector:	Marilyn Woods
<u>Dec. 24</u> Christmas Eve	Worship Assistant:	Marilyn Woods
	Usher/Greeter:	????????
	Lector:	Marilyn Woods
<u>Dec. 27</u>	Worship Assistant:	Anita Simmons
	Usher/Greeter:	Richard & Ruth James
	Lector:	Marilyn Woods
<u>Dec. 31</u> New Years Eve Healing Worship	Worship Assistant:	????????
	Usher/Greeter:	????????
	Lector:	????????



ADVENT WORSHIP

We will be having Advent worship on Wednesdays: Dec. 2, Dec. 9 and Dec. 16 at 6:30 pm. We will be using the Holden Evening Prayer service.

CHRISTMAS EVE



Candle Light Worship

We will be celebrating Jesus' birth with worship on Thursday, December 24 at 7:00 pm. We will be using the Lessons and Carols Service.



New Year's Eve

We will be having our annual Healing Worship on New Year's Eve, Thursday, December 31 at 7:00 pm.

This healing service will include the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and individual prayers. All of us experience illness, mental fatigue, and/or spiritual disillusionment in our lives from time to time. Here is an opportunity to present yourself to the Lord and receive the healing God intends for you.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
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Web Site—<http://www.splalbia.org>
Office Hours: Tues.-Weds.-Thurs.
9 am-2 pm

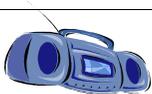
Place Mailing Label Here

Get your newsletter by e-mail and in color. Send your e-mail address to the church office.

Links:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
The Southeast Iowa Synod of the ELCA

www.elca.org
www.seiasynod.org



Radio Broadcast St. Paul's worship service is broadcast each Sunday on
KIIC (96.7 FM) during their Sunday Son—Up programs starting at 8:00 am.



WEB SITE: Check out St. Paul's Web site at <http://www.splalbia.org>.

You will find our newsletters, calendar and recipe.

Please send any photos and recipes you would like to share and Martin Reed will add these to St. Paul's Web site.

Blood Drive: Albia Ministerial Assoc. is sponsoring a blood drive on Tues. Dec 1 at Trinity United Methodist Church. From 3– 7 pm. Call 800-452-1097 to schedule an appointment.

Cookies needed for Albia Victorian Stroll: for Dec. 5th. If you can help with baking cookies for the hospitality centers during Victorian Stroll; please bring them to the Albia Chamber office on Thurs. 12/3 from 9 am—3 pm and on by NOON on Friday, 12/4.

Breakfast with Santa: on Sat. Dec. 5 from 8:30 am – 11 am at the Trinity Life Center join the fun by having breakfast with Santa. This event is Sponsored by Monroe Co. Hospice.

Bank's Christmas Open House: On Friday, December 18th from 9 am—3 pm First Iowa State Bank and People's State Bank will host their Christmas Open Houses. First Iowa State guests that sign the guest book may designate the church of their choice and they will make a contribution of \$2.00 per signature. Coffee and cookies will be served at both banks.

Lutheran Services of Iowa (LSI): Thank you for your support; we want to share with you our news of great joy; we have exceeded our goal of \$12 million in gifts and commitments for the Celebrating Tradition, Building Futures Endowment Campaign we started in 2010. Our total reached \$13,576,659. This will make a big impact for Iowa children, families and adults for years to come. With this endowment LSI will be able to continue the work that was started 151 years ago, by the Lutheran founders, when they began caring for orphans of the Civil War.