

Crossings

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

Volume 9 Issue 1

January 2014

Pastor's Epistle

Dear Friends in Christ – Happy New Year! We have to start writing “2014” on everything. Hard to believe that 14 years ago, millions of people thought the world was going to end. Well – we are still here – and I am glad.

What a lovely thing it is to celebrate the coming of the Christ child as one year ends and another year begins. Hopefully, some of you attended the healing service on New Year's Eve and allowed the Holy Spirit to reorient yourself. Receiving healing for any physical, spiritual, or emotional hurts or wounds experienced in 2013, you opened yourself up to the possibilities of 2014 with a clean slate, so to speak.

Even if you were unable to attend the Healing service, God's Spirit is alive in us and able to work in us and through us for God's good pleasure in 2014. The Holy Spirit is at work **transforming** us into God's children. But what does that mean for us individually and as a congregation called to service and to proclaim the love of Christ in this time and place?

TRANSFORM implies a major change in form, nature, or function, from top to bottom, inside and out. CONVERT implies a change fitting something for a new or different use or function. These 2 words can be used interchangeably. So what is God doing in us when we say, “God is transforming us?” or “I have had a conversion experience?”?

First, it is by God's Holy Spirit, through God's immeasurable grace and mercy that we receive this transformation in which our old selves die in Christ, through our baptism, and our new selves emerge. God is at work in us making us brand new in heart, mind, and soul. We put on Christ (Gal 3.27) are “clothed in Christ” – meaning that inside and out, we are being made new. So as we grow in faith, our thoughts, our words, and our actions become more aligned with the sacrificial love of Christ. We have a new function, a new purpose in life. We begin to put others' needs before our own. We begin to think and act more like Christ and less concerned with the world's views, our culture's demands, and our communities' expectations. As Luther states in the *Solid Declaration, Article Two: Free Will, paragraph 70*:

... it is true that in a true conversion there must be a change – new impulses and movements in mind, will, and

heart. As a result, the heart acknowledges sin, fears God's wrath, turns away from sin, acknowledges and accepts

the promise of grace, has good, spiritual thoughts, Christian intention, and diligence, and battles against the flesh,

etc.

Secondly - Lutherans have a keen awareness that we live in the “already-but-not-yet” in between times. That is to say, yes we are saved by God's grace, but our “re-birth”, our **transformation** has only begun, and our daily life is a battle between the old self's desires for self-centered control (the flesh), and our new self's desire to live for Christ. So we are in need of conversion again and again. Not because God's Spirit is weak, but because we act against the Holy Spirit and permit “sin to reign” in our lives. That's why we have weekly confession and absolution, that's why we have Holy Communion every Sunday and festival, and that's why we still offer individual confession and absolution.

So, what's your point Pr. Nancy? My point is that, at the beginning of this new year, we have an opportunity to relinquish control of our lives and to ask for God's **transformation** of our lives to commence in earnest. We can work individually and as a congregation to **discern** God's call

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

Pastor's Epistle Continued:

to ministry in our particular time and place. As individuals, can we commend our finances, our work, our jobs, our families, our friends and other living circumstances to God's care, trusting in God's mercy? As a congregation, can we commend our finances, our work, our facilities and land, and our pastor, staff, and members to God's care, trusting in God's mercy? Are we willing to spend time together in worship, prayer, bible study and conversation to discern what God would have us be and do in this time and place? Are we honestly open to having God convert us into something better for us and for the world we live in?

It is my hope and prayer that individually and as a congregation, we commit to each other to set this year as the year of prayerful discernment regarding who we are as Christian individuals, and who we are as a congregation. Let us renew our commitment to Christ and to serving him in new and maybe surprising ways this coming year.

Walking with you along the Way – Pr. Nancy



Comments from Bishop Elizabeth Eaton In the January 2014 Lutheran magazine (page 50), our new bishop provided some thoughts that might help us in our discerning conversations:

“Baptism makes a difference and makes us different. We are in Christ. Baptism means the death of our old self. This implies sacrifice. It should also mean that we as church do not fit in with the surrounding culture. There are many socially conscious, kindhearted, generous, morally upright, compassionate atheists in the world. How are we distinguishable from them? If our life together consists primarily of being affirmed by God's unconditional love and doing works of justice and charity *without understanding that God has brought about the transformation of justified sinners through the costly grace of the crucified Christ, then we are not church.* (Italics and bolding are mine).

As church, the Body of Christ, “we are in the faith formation business; not to get more members, not to get more market share, but to know Christ and Christ crucified.”

While her whole article is worthy of prayer and discussion, she clarifies what it means for church to be engaged in discernment versus decision-making:

“Decision-making is something we do. Discernment is something we receive from the Spirit. Paul takes an entire chapter (1 Corinthians 2) explaining this. We need to move beyond reliance on human thinking and strategizing to a place of deep listening – intentional, intense, disciplined attending to God”.

Finally she ends with this: We are church first. All our work flows from this. Let's keep the main thing the main thing.”
Food for prayerful thought.



ANNUAL Meeting on Sunday, January 26th, 2014
immediately following worship & potluck



The purpose of this meeting is to review the proceeding year, determine our ministry and financial goals, and grow in faith and fellowship together. All voting members are encouraged to attend. Per chapter 8 of the congregation's constitution, membership is defined as follows:

C8.02.a. Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.

C8.02.b. Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.

C8.02.c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members shall have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year.

C8.02.d. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.

A “contribution of record” can be given as a check, an offering envelope, or an envelope in which cash has been placed and the person's name and the date are on the outside of the envelope. A voting member includes any person under age 18 who has been recently confirmed who has also given a contribution of record.



St. Paul's Shut-ins:
Hilda Felton

**Education/
Prayer Team**

Alex Amante
Merrill Baker
Karen Blomme
Bill Brubaker
Kevin Bunch
Gail Connerly
Jani Dorpinghaus
Mary Dchefschski
Gary & Mary Egbert
Judith Giertz
Brantley Hemann
Mary Illingworth
Casey Keel
Rev. Laura Koppenhaeffer
Casey Keel
Marty Kroenecke

Bryce Kroenecke
Kenneth Leaven
Loren Lettington
Richard McDonough
Dale Madison
Laura Moore
Ronda Morgan
Trisha Raven
Richard Rowley
Sheila Ryan
Charlie Smallwood
Misty Smith
Bert Whitlock
Rev. Nicole Woodley



In Sympathy

We send our sympathy to the family & friends of :
LuVerne Sharp, Evelyn Sharp's nephew who died on Nov. 30th.

Connie Gutch, Marilyn Johnson's Sister-in-law who died on Dec. 4th.

Larry Johnson who died on Dec. 12th.

Pamela (Demoss) McDonough, Melissa Griebel's Aunt who died on Dec. 21st.

May they all be reassured by God's presence and strengthened in the certain hope of the resurrection.



Children's Church

This is where the children 2nd grade and under leave church during the sermon and have a Bible story and then return during the passing of the peace.

	Lesson	Teacher
1/5	Shepherds & Wise men	Brooke Sparks
1/12	Flight to Egypt & Jesus in the Temple	Tom & Linda Preston
1/19	Jesus is Baptized	Jacob Hemann
1/26	Wedding at Cana	Gloria

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation Class: Weds. Jan 8th, 15th, 22 and 29th.
With a Skit on Sunday Jan. 19th.

Worship Servers sign-up: Everyone is encouraged to sign up to help with worship as a lector, usher, and/or acolyte.

It is an expectation that you would **continue to sign-up as an acolyte after you have been confirmed through the 9th grade.** Just a note: you can get high school silver service hours for helping with worship, children's church and VBS.

FAITH & FILM Jan. 5th "Life is Beautiful" Starting a 5 pm
Bring a drink and munchies to share.

We will be meeting at the parsonage (207 N. 10th St in Albia)
EVERYONE IS WELCOME



Women's Bible Study:
Starting on Jan. 15th at 11 a.m. See more info under WELCA on page 4.

Fellowship Team Ministries

3rd Sunday Brunch



January 19

POT LUCK on Jan. 26th
Annual Meeting

Senior Fellowship

Join us for a potluck lunch on **Weds. Jan. 8th at 11:00 am.**

WELCA

Women's Bible Study: Join us on Wed. 15th at 11 a.m.

January Bible Study: Abigail, a Calm Strategist. Theme: Offering Hospitality. We want our churches to be inviting and welcoming places. Sometimes we fall short. How do we live out God's hospitality in our communities? Study verses:

1 Samuel 25:1-42, Psalm 131, Luke 10:25-42

MEETING: January 23rd we will go out to dinner at Bogies Steak House at 6:30 p.m. for our meeting.

Thank you to everyone who helped with the soup luncheon & supper and everyone who donated items/baked desserts/made soups and candy. It was a great success because of all of you.



Birthdays & Anniversaries



January Birthdays

3. Mary Mitchell
3. Becca Mason
7. Isaac Dowdy
8. Wesley Clouse
11. Alex Mason
16. Spenser Johnson
17. Aaron Keeton
21. Mitchel Sparks
22. Marilyn Johnson
25. Betty Hohneke
26. Ruth Johnson
30. Sharon Wilkin
30. Linda Preston
30. Ruth James
31. Tyler Clouse



January Baptismal Birthdays

1. Janet Hansen-Tilley
1. John Cole Blomgren
10. Tray Tilley
17. Olivia Sherman
20. Karen Niebuhr
21. Kevin Tangie
30. Quentin Lee Butler
31. Brittany (Sparks) Flattery



January Anniversaries

23. Ron & Betty Hohneke

Special Note: Praise God for Kellen's miracle. I want to thank everyone for prayers for Kellen and Janet. You are all part of Kellen's miracle of healing. God can do what medicine can't do. Thank you for your prayers and God Bless each of you.

Mary Carder

Congratulations— Baby Girl



Michael and Amanda Thomas on the birth their daughter, Whitney Mae, was born on December 10th. Whitney weighed 8 lbs. and 13 oz. and was 20 1/2 inches long. She was welcomed home by her brother Brody, 3 years and sister Blair, 2 years. Grandparents are Daryl and Bernice Butler and Dave and Cathy Thomas. Great-grandparents are Rachel Butler, Wanda Thomas and Sharon & Joe Nucko.

Worship Servers

Altar Guild: Betty Hohneke & Karen Niebuhr

<u>Jan. 5</u>	Worship Assistant: Gail Clouse Ushers/Greeters: _____ Lector: Gail Clouse Acolyte: _____
<u>Jan 12</u>	Worship Assistant: Marilyn Woods Ushers/Greeters: _____ Lector: _____ Acolyte: _____
<u>Jan. 19</u>	Worship Assistant: Marilyn Woods Usher/Greeter: Karen & Don Niebuhr Lector: _____ Acolyte: _____
<u>Jan. 26</u>	Worship Assistant: Anita Simmons Usher/Greeter: Karen & Don Niebuhr Lector: _____ Acolyte: _____

Worship Server's for the 2014 year: Please sign up for Ushers, Lectors, Acolytes, Crucifers and Worship Assistants, ASAP. These positions are very important; our worship services are enhanced by your participation. *We would like to thank all of you that gave of your time and talents this past year, it is greatly appreciated.*

Worship Team Ministries

CHOIR Practice

8:15 am



Jan. 5
Jan. 12
Jan. 19
Jan. 26



Mission Task Force

Meeting Jan. 12th after worship.

Annual Meeting of St. Paul's Lutheran will be **January 26th** after worship.

Lutheran Magazine

UP-Dated Notice: to help with the budget for 2014, St. Paul's Council decided that St. Paul's **will not** be able to continue to pay for the magazine. If you want the magazine and want to get the discounted rate (\$8.95) make a check out to St. Paul's & put in the offering plate and we will send it in for you.



Council Notices

Council Meeting: NOTE DATE CHANGE Mon. 6th at 6:30 pm

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Worship Reminder Notices: Council has decided to help cut the postage costs in the yearly budget by not mailing out the following reminder notices: Acolyte, Lector, Usher, Altar Guild and hymns for organist. Everyone will be sent a reminder via e-mail or txt message.

Newsletter: Will be sent by e-mail or be picked up at the church. They no longer will be mailed out. Please give us your e-mail address if we do not have it. (E-mailed newsletters come in color.)

St. Paul's Directory: Please update our directory for the new year. If you no longer have a phone land line, please give us your cell number. If you have a change of address, please let us know. If you have a new e-mail address please let us know that as well.

Annual Reports are Past due. Jan. 10th is the last day to get the reports into the office. Reports are still needed from: Council Pres., Pastor Reed, Fellowship, Missions Task Force, Property Task Force, and WELCA Treas. Report.

Special Council Meeting: on Jan. 26th after the Annual Meeting.

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

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
335 North Eighth Street
Albia, IA 52531

Phone: 641-932-7270
Email: splalbia@iowatelecom.net
Web Site—<http://www.splalbia>.


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
Augsburg Fortress—the Publishing Ministry of the ELCA

www.elca.org
www.seiasynod.org
www.augsburgfortress.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.



EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE OFFICE HOURS: Monday 9:30 –11:30 am & 1-3 pm
Wednesday 9 am—Noon & 1—3 pm Friday 9 am—Noon

Library Staff Open House: On Tuesday, January 14 for 4-6 pm will be celebrating the long time service of Carnegie-Evans Public Library employees, Betty Reeves, 35 years, Marilyn Woods, 30 years and Ruth James, 15 years.



MISSION'S Poinsettias Donation totals

Global Barnyard - \$200 Helping Hands - \$45 Albia Ministerial - \$130



Plus Christmas presents purchased by St. Paul's members and WELCA; that filled the wish lists of **all 3 families**.

And \$130 to one of our Christmas families to help with medical expenses. Thank you to everyone who donated.



Thank You to everyone who helped ring bells for the Salvation Army this year. A total of \$6,115.13 was collected and 90% of that amount will come back to the Monroe Co. Ministerial to assist those that need help in our county.