



## THE CHURCH DOOR

Dr. Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church

December 2003



I would like to begin by saying thank-you for the pas-

tor appreciation gift the congregation presented to me on the last Sunday in October. The gift was quite a surprise and very much appreciated. Unfortunately I was unable to get a thank-you into the newsletter until now because the November newsletter had already been printed.

It's a good to be appreciated and nice for that appreciation to be expressed in some tangible way. Sometimes in our relationships with others we can forget to show that tangible appreciation and when we do that we take someone for granted. Perhaps those most often taken for granted are our loved ones. Think about those whom you appreciate your life, don't forget friends and co-workers, and take a

moment to show your appreciation in some tangible way. It could be in the form of the gift but it also be in the form of kind words or making yourself available to spend some time with them.

There is someone else who can end up in the "taken for granted" group and that is the Lord. God has done and continues to do great things for us and even though we might be appreciative of them it's nice to show that appreciation in some tangible way. One of the easiest ways of doing that is simply by attending worship or by being generous in our offerings. Another way is through prayer where we take time to give God thanks and praise. Someone has said that God knows all our thoughts but would like to hear it from our lips from time to time.

The Psalmist knew this and wrote, <sup>1</sup>*It is good to give thanks to the LORD,*

*to sing praises to your name, O Most High;*

<sup>2</sup>*to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night,*

<sup>3</sup>*to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.*

<sup>4</sup>*For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work;*

*at the works of your hands I sing for joy. (Psalm 92:1-4).*

Finally, I want to express my appreciation for all the saints at DML. It has been and is a privilege and blessing to serve as your pastor. To use the words of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the saints at Philippi, *I thank my God every time I remember you, <sup>4</sup>constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, <sup>5</sup>because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup>I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by*

*the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:3-6).*

Grace, mercy and peace to all the saints at DML,

Pastor Dennis



## The Church Door

The "Church Door" title is taken from the "Theses Door" of the Castle Church which has made Wittenberg so famous.

Just as the "Theses Door" was used as a bulletin board for notices in Luther's time, this newsletter can also be used by our members to communicate with each other and to our guests about church events. Published monthly it is available the last Sunday of the month.

Please contact Cindy Borreson (616.846.2477 or [cborreson@charter.net](mailto:cborreson@charter.net)) to insert articles for next month's newsletter.





## *Worship Assistants*

## *Hymns & Lessons*

### December 5—2nd Sunday in Advent

*Deacon* Janet Wolf  
*Lector* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Acolyte* Andrew Kitchka  
*Nursery* Nancy Johnson  
*Ushers* Mike Sellon  
Russ Tilden  
*Tellers* Tom & Donna Whitehead  
Gordon Eggleton

**Lessons**  
Isaiah 11:1-10  
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19  
Romans 15:4-13  
Matthew 3:1-12

**Hymns**  
#34—Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel\*\*  
#36—On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry  
#33—The King Shall Come\*\*  
#35—Hark, the Glad Sound!

### December 12—3rd Sunday in Advent

*Deacon* Cindy Borreson  
*Lector* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Acolyte* Matthew Kitchka  
*Nursery* Lauren Johnson  
*Ushers* Emily Kitchka  
Bill Kitchka  
*Tellers* Randy & Cindy Borreson  
Polly Eagle

**Lessons**  
Isaiah 35:1-10  
Luke 1:47-55  
James 5:7-10  
Matthew 11:2-11

**Hymns**  
#32—Fling Wide the Door\*\*  
#26—Prepare the Royal Highway  
#634—Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly  
#28—Savior of the Nations, Come  
#30—Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

### December 19—4th Sunday in Advent

*Deacon* Rose Justian  
*Lector* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Acolyte* Becky Stroh  
*Nursery* Beulah Justian  
*Ushers* Emogene Cotal  
Jan Wolf  
*Tellers* LaVern & Irene Borreson  
Bill Kitchka

**Lessons**  
Isaiah 7:10-16  
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
Romans 1:1-7  
Matthew 1:18-25

**Hymns**  
#29—Comfort, Comfort Now My People  
#23—O Lord, How Shall I Meet You  
#701—What Feast of Love  
#626—People, Look East  
#633—Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn

### December 26—1st Sunday of Christmas

*Deacon* Andrew Kitchka  
*Lector* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Acolyte* Emily Johnson  
*Nursery* Rose Justian  
*Ushers* John Moore  
Tom Proksa  
*Tellers* Tom & Betty Proksa  
John Moore

**Lessons**  
Isaiah 63:7-9  
Psalm 148  
Hebrews 2:10-18  
Matthew 2:13-23

**Hymns**  
#55—Good Christian Friends, Rejoice\*\*  
#54—It Came Upon the Midnight Clear\*\*  
#41—O Little Town of Bethlehem\*\*  
#39—Joy to the World\*\*



## Dorcas Circle

### Annual Christmas Lunch at Red Lobster

Monday, Dec 6 at 1 pm

The Dorcas Circle ladies will meet for their annual Christmas Lunch/ Meeting at Red Lobster. They invite anyone who wishes to join them for food and fellowship. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board. Please bring a \$3 donation for the Annual Christ Gift for our missionary in Slovakia. Please contact Ann Hamil for additional information, (231) 798-2414

## EVE Circle Sponsor of the St. Nicholas Tree

Meetings the first Tuesday of the month. Next meeting, December 12 at 6:30 pm.

Please contact Betty Proksa for additional information, (231) 798-7485

## MEN'S CLUB

Breakfast Meeting Saturday, December 4, 9:00 am at Nino's.

Contact Russ Tilden at 616-844-0883 with questions.

## BIBLE Club

The Club is working on their Christmas Program which will be presented during the Christmas Eve Service.



The BIBLE Club Christmas program will be during the Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve.



**December 24, 2004—7:00 pm**  
Christmas Eve Candle-light Service



**December 25, 2004—11:00 am**  
Christ-Mass Service  
The Holy Eucharist



## Church Council Minutes—November 8, 2004

Gene Broge called the meeting to order at about 6:30 p.m. Pastor led devotions with a reading from Philemon 1.

Present: Cindy Borreson, Gene Broge, Emogene Cotal, Stephen Hellman, Betty Proksa, Pastor Stroh, Tom Whitehead

Excused: Gordon Eggleton, Janet Wolf  
Absent: Beulah Justian

Guest: Ellen Cutting, part-time Director of Collaborative Ministries, Stony Lake Conference

The normal order of business was suspended to allow Ellen Cutting to make a presentation about the new collaborative ministries program being starting up by the Stony Lake Conference.

- Nine congregations in the conference plus DML.
- The vision of the conference is to provide a collaborative effort for shared ministries and projects.
- Goals:
  - Equipping the saints (ongoing)
  - Youth gatherings, starting with ones on 2/13/05 and 4/15-4/17/05
  - Lutheran Lay Institute and Forums
  - Work with congregations and leaders on a conference Evangelism initiative
- Steering Committee: 2 lay people from each congregation, one or two clergy from the conference.
- Some anticipated projects:
  - Begin process for ministry to the Latino population
  - Planning & implementation of ministry in Muskegon Heights
  - Develop service evangelism opportunities
  - Develop a fine arts focus of ministry including:
    - § Fine Arts Festival in 2005
    - § Summer music mentoring program for college and seminary students
- Funding:
  - NW Lower MI Synod \$14,781
  - ELCA Div for Outreach \$8,200
  - Fundraising \$2,723

- Conf Congregations \$2,950  
- Total \$28,654

First Lutheran is giving \$1,000. DML is asked to give \$250

- Need a document signed by two members of each congregation indicating support by mid-November.
- Steering committee to meet at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, November 9<sup>th</sup> at First Lutheran Church.

The Council thanked Ellen for her presentation and indicated that it would get back with her about whether DML would participate in the effort.

### Secretary's Report:

Minutes of the October 11, 2004 Council meeting were presented in written form. One correction was noted: Betty said that she was not present at the October meeting.

### Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer's Report for October 31, 2004 was presented in printed form. Cindy explained that the reports show a credit balance in the checking account because she wrote the checks on Sunday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, and made the deposit on Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup>. As of 11/8/04, the checking account had a balance of \$2,389.63 with some bills to pay. The fund balances as of 10/31/04 can be found on page \_\_\_\_.

### Pastor's Report

Pastor presented a written report and talked about some of the key points:

- Bishop Wilma Kucharek wants to visit DML in December or January while visiting Chicago.
- Lucille Bulthouse, a local Remax realtor, informally asked Pastor Stroh about whether DML would be interested in selling 60 feet along the east side of the property to provide access to some property that she has that is land-locked. The consensus of the Council was that we are not interested.
- Pastor mentioned that the Council needs to decide whether DML will participate in the Stony Lake Confer-

ence's Collaborative Efforts and if so, to provide two people to attend the steering committee meeting on 11/9/04. Tom moved to have DML contribute \$250 for the Stony Lake Conference Collaborative Efforts. Cindy seconded. Approved. Cindy will find out to whom the check should be made out and then get it sent in to the Conference. Tom suggestive Dave and Rose Justian as potential DML representatives on the steering committee and said he would contact them.

- Pastor mentioned the need to get more information about the boiler before any action is taken. The matter was referred to the Property Committee to get:
  - defined requirements in writing
  - bids from several contractors.
- Pastor mentioned that the Slovak Synod is asking for a special appeal. Council decided not to participate in the special appeal.
- Pastor discussed getting a Slovak seminarian this summer. We would collaborate again with Samuel Lutheran. There might be additional charges for health care insurance for the seminarian this year, which means the overall cost will probably be somewhat higher.
- Gideon's will be at DML on Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>. There will be a free will offering to support the work of the Gideon's.
- Teen Challenge will be at DML on Feb. 13, 2005. We will schedule the Transfiguration Day meal for the same Sunday.
- Pastor provided some information from Rycenga Lumber regarding windows.

### Committee Reports:

#### Property

Steve indicated that we have diseased plum trees in the front of the church. Will take care of these in the Spring.



Steve asked whether we should have an efficiency test performed on the boilers, cost would be about \$200. Council decided not to spend the money but to have the Property Committee concentrate on developing plans for the boiler.

Discussed the need to repair or replace windows. The matter was referred to the Property Committee for recommendations.

Steve mentioned that the snow blower should be checked and tuned up for the winter. Cindy recommended that Steve have Randy Borreson check it.

**Evangelism**

No report. No meeting last month.

Next meeting will be Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Finance**

Provided a presented a proposed budget at the Congregational Meeting on Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>. Attendance and offering totals were included in the bulletins, as requested at the last Council meeting.

**Parish Education**

No report.

**Social Ministry**

Have sent cards to the sick and flowers to the hospitalized.

**Stewardship**

Will meet on Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>. Are preparing for the Christmas program on Christmas Eve.

**Worship & Music**

Will discuss the format for the Sunday bulletins based on the input obtained at the Congregational Meeting. Will also work on fundraising to purchase more Blue Books.

**Executive Committee—Mutual Ministry**

Met on 10/30/04. Discussed when children should be admitted to Communion. Policy has been at whatever age that the Pastor and the parents agree the child is ready.

**Special Committees**

**Dorcas & Eve Circles:**

The bazaar was a joint effort of the two circles and did well. The new church sign might have helped. There had been a question of what to do with the left over goods. Money raised:

Baked goods	\$817.60
White elephant sales	228.20
Kitchen (lunches)	315.90

Crafts 391.18

Total \$1,752.28

The women believe they could have sold more kolač if they had had it.

**Eve Circle**

Will meet on Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>. Need a display rack for the cards that the women are making.

**Men's Club**

Took the left over goods from the bazaar to Goodwill and cleaned out the two storage rooms in the fellowship hall.

The new white banquet tables have been purchased and are now in the storage rooms in the fellowship hall. Council decided that we should keep five of the best of the old tables and these will be the ones that are available to be lent out. The white tables and the round brown tables are not to be loaned out.

**Youth Grou**

No report.

Petitions and Communications:

Louie and Darlene Boucher thanked the Men's Club for cleaning out the storage rooms in the fellowship hall.

## 2004 Congregation Council

2003 – 2005 Term  
 Cindy Borreson—1  
 Gene Broge—1  
 Gordon Eggleton—1

2004 – 2006 Term  
 Emogene Cotal—1  
 Stephen Hellman—1  
 Tom Whitehead—1

2005—2007  
 Randy Borreson—1  
 Brian Doane—1  
 Russ Tilden—1

Thank you to Randy Borreson, Brian Doane, and Russ Tilden for agreeing to support DML.

Installation will take place on Sunday, December 19, 2004

All 2005 Members are asked to attend the December 6th meeting as officers will be elected and Committees will be organized.

It is important that we support our elected Council. When asked to assist on a committee, please agree; your involvement makes it easier for ALL of us to carry the responsibility of spreading God's word and seeing to the care of DML.



## *Financial Information—October 31, 2004*

### ASSETS

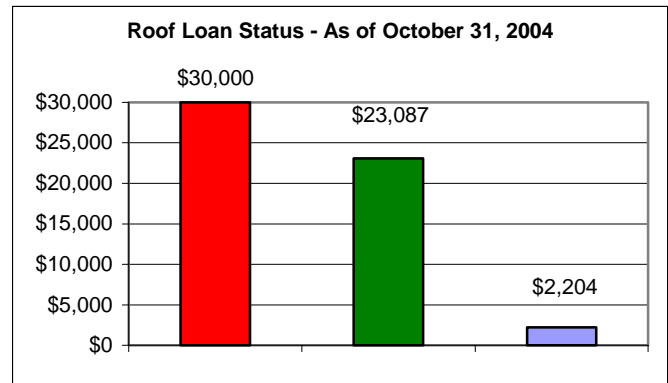
<u>Cash &amp; Bank Accounts</u>	
<u>Funds for General Operations</u>	
Checkbook	\$-2,181.61
Cash Account	\$3,607.88
Savings – Reserve	\$5,515.04
<u>Total Funds for General Operations</u>	<u>\$7,141.31</u>
 <u>Funds for Special Purposes</u>	
<u>Savings—Designated</u>	
Roof Fund (Loan)	\$2,203.50
Evangelism	\$69.00
Eve Circle	\$2,022.89
Kitchen Fund	\$350.20
Men's Club	\$314.31
Youth Group	\$149.39
<u>Total Savings—Designated</u>	<u>\$5,109.29</u>
Savings – Memorial	\$6,705.51
Savings – Social Security	\$466.41
<u>Total Funds for Special Purposes</u>	<u>\$12,281.21</u>
<u>Total Cash and Bank Accounts</u>	<u>\$19,422.52</u>
 <u>Investments—Designated for Housing Allowance</u>	
LB Money Market—Cash	\$306.17
LB Fund	\$29,703.62
LB Income Fund	\$45,097.45
<u>Total Investments</u>	<u>\$75,107.24</u>
<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u>	<u>\$94,529.76</u>

### LIABILITIES

Roof Loan Liability	\$6,497.49
WH—Federal Tax Liability	\$1,416.53
WH—State Tax Liability	\$107.00
<u>TOTAL LIABILITIES</u>	<u>\$8,021.02</u>

### Breakdown of Giving for Loan

November 2003 .....	\$1,645.50
December 2003 .....	\$911.00
January 2004 .....	\$302.00
February 2004 .....	\$373.00
March 2004 .....	\$419.00
April 2004 .....	\$1,218.00
May 2004 .....	\$717.00
June 2004 .....	\$505.00
July 2004 .....	\$764.00
August 2004 .....	\$722.00
September 2004 .....	\$438.50
October 2004 .....	\$924.50



### Summary Information for October

Average Attendance for October = 61

Offering Needed to meet 2004 Budget                      \$7,830.54

Amount Received toward Budget                                \$6,686.00





Those in need of healing:

Brett Cavanaugh

Beryl Connelly

Bea Eggleton

Millie Fredrick

Stephen Hellman

Ann Hulka

Floyd Nickisch

Vicki Peterson

Jeannette Roach

Judy Slezak

(Irene Borreson's sister & previous member)

Paul Suchovsky

Lowell Tambling

Do you have a loved one you would like included in the prayers or added to our prayer list? Please contact Cindy Borreson at 616-846-2477 or by email at cborreson@charter.net and she will see they are included.

## Remember our friends and family members in the Military

Sgt. Kevin William Sellon (*Mike & Carol Sellon's son*)  
United States Army—Stationed at Camp Stanley, Korea

SSgt. Jeffrey Richard Sellon (*Mike & Carol Sellon's son*)  
United States Air Force—Stationed at Travis Air Force Base, CA

Sgt. Kenneth W. Hawkins (*Tom and Betty Proksa's nephew*)  
United States Army—Stationed in Iraq

AJ-3 Lisa Pepera (*Virginia Kolarik's granddaughter*)  
United States Navy—Serving on the USS Kitty Hawk

AT-2 Russ Tilden, Jr. (*Russ Tilden's son*)  
United States Navy—Serving on the USS Washington

If you'd like to add a name to this list, please contact Cindy Borreson.

### America's Pride

We do not know you Soldiers or ever heard your names,  
But every day you're fighting on our TV screens.

With pounding hearts we watch you, so very young and brave,  
And ask the Lord to keep you safe for another day.

And while the bombs keep falling and cannon fires roar,  
You're slowly inching forward amazingly unharmed.

Explosions in the distance and rising plumes of smoke,  
You face it all for freedom, for liberty and life.

Each day that dawns you offer your life, so we may live,  
And only some may know you and some might know your name.

But we who never knew you will weep for you and mourn,  
If you should fall in battle far from your native home.

You are our unknown Heroes, you're every mother's child  
And every father's greatest hope, You are America's Pride.

by Karin Kuskis (submitted by Mary Panozzo)

# CALENDAR OBSERVANCES—*December 2004*

## **Friday, December 3—Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, 1552**

Francis Xavier was born in the Basque region of northern Spain. Francis's native Basque language is unrelated to any other, and Francis admitted that learning languages was difficult for him. Despite this obstacle he became a missionary to India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and the Philippines. At each point he learned the local language and, like Martin Luther, wrote catechisms for the instruction of new converts. Another obstacle Francis overcame to accomplish his mission work was a propensity to seasickness. All his travels to the Far East were by boat. Together with Ignatius Loyola and five others, Francis formed the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). Francis spoke out against the Spanish and Portuguese colonists when he discovered their oppression of the indigenous people to whom he was sent as a missionary.

Pray for churches and missionaries in Asia, spiritual heirs to Francis Xavier.

## **Monday, December 6—Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, c. 342**

Though Nicholas is one of the church's most beloved saints, little is known about his life. In the fourth century he was a bishop in what is now Turkey. Legends that surround Nicholas tell of his love for God and neighbor, especially the poor. One famous story tells of Nicholas secretly giving bags of gold to the three daughters of a father who was going to sell them into prostitution because he could not provide dowries for them. Nicholas has become a symbol of anonymous gift giving.

In some countries gifts are given on this day, and may include a visit from Nicholas himself. One of the ways Nicholas can be remembered is to have the congregation or families within it gather to prepare gifts that will be given anonymously as a way to remind us of the tradition of giving gifts as a sign of God's love given freely to all.

## **Tuesday, December 7—Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, 397**

Ambrose was a governor of northern Italy and a catechumen when he was elected bishop of Milan. He was baptized, ordained, and consecrated a bishop all on the same day. While bishop he gave away his wealth and lived in simplicity. He was a famous preacher and is largely responsible for the conversion of St. Augustine.

He is also well known for writing hymns. On one occasion, Ambrose led people in a hymn he wrote while the church in which they were secluded was threatened by attack from Gothic soldiers. The soldiers turned away, unwilling to attack a congregation that was singing a hymn.

## **Saturday, December 11—Lars Olsen Skrefsrud, missionary to India, 1910**

Lars Olsen Skrefsrud was born in Norway in 1840. When he was nineteen years old, he and some friends robbed a bank. In prison he began to read religious books. Visits with a pastor who came to the prison revived Skrefsrud's earlier desire to become a pastor. In 1863 he began work among the Santals of northern India. His work among them included providing a written language, translating the gospels and the Small Catechism, and writing hymns in that language. He also taught agriculture and carpentry methods to raise the Santals' standard of living. The Christian community he founded there continues to flourish.

Consider ways in which Skrefsrud's life echoes the prophetic work of Isaiah and John the Baptist, who prepared the way of the Lord. In what ways can a congregation's proclamation of the gospel and its work for justice point the way to the coming Christ?

## **Tuesday, December 14—John of the Cross, 1591; Teresa of Avila, 1582; renewers of the church**

John and Teresa were both members of the Carmelite religious order. John met Teresa when she was working to reform the Carmelite Order and return it to a stricter observance of its rules, from which she believed its members had departed. John followed Teresa's lead and encouraged others to follow her reform. He was imprisoned when he encountered opposition to the reform. Both John and Teresa's writings reflect a deep interest in mystical thought and meditation. Their emphasis on contemplation can guide us in our Advent worship as we watch for the coming Christ.

Both John and Teresa believed that authentic prayer leads to greater love of neighbor and service to those in need. Teresa wrote, "Christ has no body now but yours . . . yours are the eyes through which he looks in compassion on the world." In one of John's poems, "The Spiritual Canticle," he cried, "Oh, that my griefs would end! Come, grant me thy fruition full and free!"

### **Thursday, December 16—Las Posadas**

Las Posadas, "the lodgings," is celebrated in homes of Mexican heritage and is becoming a popular parish practice as well. Families or groups of people wander through the neighborhood to mark the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. They knock on doors, asking to come in, but a rude voice says that there is no room. The visitors either respond that Mary is about to give birth to the king of heaven, or they sing an Advent carol foretelling his birth. Eventually the door is opened, and everyone is welcomed into a great party of traditional Mexican holiday food and singing.

The traditional songs of this celebration are included in *Libro de Liturgia y Cántico* (284-86). Las Posadas can be a strong reminder of Christ's humble birth among the poor and the importance of extending hospitality.

### **Tuesday, December 21—St. Thomas, Apostle**

Thomas is perhaps best remembered as "Doubting Thomas." But alongside this doubt, the gospel of John shows Thomas as fiercely loyal: "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John 11:16). And John's gospel shows Thomas moving from doubt to deep faith. Thomas makes one of the strongest confessions of faith in the New Testament: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). From this confession of faith, ancient stories tell of Thomas's missionary work to India where Christian communities were flourishing a thousand years before the arrival of sixteenth-century missionaries.

Though we hear about Thomas each year on the second Sunday of Easter, Thomas can also serve as an Advent saint. He watched for the risen Christ and looked for the signs of Christ's incarnation. In Advent we, too, watch. We look for the coming of Christ in our lives, his risen presence in the sacraments, and his incarnation soon to be celebrated at Christmas.

### **Sunday, December 26—St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr**

Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.

The Christmas song "Good King Wenceslas" takes place on the feast of Stephen. The king sees a peasant gathering wood near the forest and sends his page to invite the peasant to a feast. The song, with its theme of charity to the poor, can be a way to remember Stephen, who cared for widows and those in need.

### **Monday, December 27—St. John, Apostle and Evangelist**

John, the son of Zebedee, was a fisherman and one of the twelve. John, his brother James, and Peter were the three who witnessed the light of the transfiguration. John and James once made known their desire to hold positions of power in the kingdom of God. Jesus' response showed them that service to others was the sign of God's reign in the world. Though authorship of the gospel and the three epistles bearing his name has often been attributed to the apostle John, this tradition cannot be proven from scriptural evidence.

John is a saint for Christmas through his proclamation that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, that the light of God shines in the darkness, and that we are called to love one another as Christ has loved us. According to an early story about John, his enemies once tried to murder him with poisoned wine. On this day, many Christians in Europe will toast one another with the words "I drink to the love of John."

### **Tuesday, December 28—The Holy Innocents, Martyrs**

In a culture where Christmas is overcommercialized and sentimentalized, the commemoration of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs on the fourth day of Christmas must come as something of a shock. How could the birth of a baby be the occasion for the death of anyone? Yet these martyrs were the children of Bethlehem, two years old and younger, who were killed by Herod, who worried that his reign was threatened by the birth of a new king. St. Augustine called these innocents "buds, killed by the frost of persecution the moment they showed themselves." Those linked to Jesus through their youth and innocence encounter the same hostility Jesus encounters later in his ministry.

Remembering all innocent victims and taking up the words of the prayer of the day, which ask God to "frustrate the designs of evil tyrants and establish your rule of justice, love, and peace," can mark this commemoration.

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# December 2004

<b>1</b>	On this World AIDS Day, pray for all who are engaged in health care ministries. Pray for Drs. Holly and Timothy Nelson, serving as pediatrician and surgeon, respectively, at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon hospital in Ngaoundéré, Cameroon. This is one of several hospitals and clinics operated by the church.
<b>2</b>	Give thanks for Patricia Bentsen, who has served for many years as a nurse in Madagascar and recently began serving as a medical administrator to the Malagasy Lutheran Church Health Department in the capital city of Antananarivo.
<b>3</b>	Pray for mission developer Patricia Davenport and Spirit and Truth Worship Center in Yeadon, Pennsylvania, as they prepare to organize as a congregation of the ELCA. Spirit and Truth is an ELCA mission serving the African American and African immigrant communities outside Philadelphia.
<b>4</b>	Pray for Lowell and Junko Gretebeck, who serve the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church. Lowell serves with a congregation in Tokyo and provides leadership with the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Association, a Lutheran-affiliated mission foundation of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church.
<b>5</b>	Advent 2 <b>God of the nations, we give you thanks for the Christian communities in India, Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Give them strength to be witnesses to your love and peace. We lift up to you the companion relationship between the South Andhra Lutheran Church of India and the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, and between the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Northwestern Minnesota Synod.</b>
<b>6</b>	Pray for the special up-grading program in which Barbara Robertson teaches in Tanzania. This program prepares secondary students, who have not had the opportunity to prepare effectively for national examinations, to pass qualifying tests and enter the Haydom Hospital Lutheran School of Nursing.
<b>7</b>	Pray for Pastor Dani Jo Ninke-Greaver and Christ the King Lutheran Church in Yankton, South Dakota. Pray that they experience God's transforming presence as the congregation undergoes redevelopment.
<b>8</b>	Give thanks for Robert Schick, who teaches Islamics at the Henry Martyn Institute, an international center for reconciliation and interfaith relations in Hyderabad, India. Pray that his witness among students and staff will be a beacon of encouragement and inspiration.
<b>9</b>	Give thanks for Pastor Patricia Muran and her husband, Tom, who share the Good News of Jesus with people from Oaxaca, Mexico, living in Santa Maria, California. Their developing congregation is called Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz.
<b>10</b>	Thank God for Beth Elness-Hanson and Eric Hanson, who are completing two years of teaching ministry as volunteers at the Maasae Girls Lutheran Secondary School in Monduli, Tanzania.
<b>11</b>	Give thanks for the hundreds of people serving the ELCA as churchwide, deployed or synodical staff, who work tirelessly to spread the gospel and to serve the members of the ELCA
<b>12</b>	Advent 3 <b>Merciful God, we thank you for the growing peace in Angola and Mozambique. We also lift up the companion relationship between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mozambique and the ELCA Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, that they may grow in the sharing of their gifts.</b>
<b>13</b>	Give thanks to God for the leadership of Karen and Pastor Karl Peters as they serve with the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Bolivia. Pray for his work as a teacher at both the Bible Institute at El Redentor Church in La Paz and the Lutheran Bible Institute in Apolo. Pray also for the companion synod relationship that exists between the Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church and the ELCA Montana Synod.
<b>14</b>	Remember Christine Eige, Paul Forsyth, John Haines, and Nicholas Mason, who began their in-country orientation this fall as they prepare to teach in Japan. In the Lutheran schools and congregations where they will serve, English lessons help reach out to young adults. Remember the faculty, staff, and students of all of the educational institutions related to the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church.
<b>15</b>	Pray for courage, wisdom, and creative means of raising funds to support Extended Grace Lutheran Church's outreach to gay and lesbian people in Grand Haven, Michigan. Pray also for Barbara Zielinski, the mission developer of this ministry.
<b>16</b>	Pray for Pastor Andrew and Barbara Hinderlie, who serve as ELCA regional representatives for East Africa and work with churches of Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Sudan, Uganda, and Rwanda.
<b>17</b>	Thank God for Pastor Doug and Monica Cox in Madagascar. They are engaged in evangelism ministry with the Malagasy Lutheran Church.

18	Pray for Pastor Douglas Schoelles and Church of the Resurrection, an ELCA mission in Roanoke, Texas, just north of Fort Worth.
19	Advent 4 <b>O God, look with mercy upon the people of Botswana and Zimbabwe as they continue to struggle with economic and political uncertainty. Give strength especially to the companion relationship between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe and the ELCA Upstate New York Synod.</b>
20	Pray for David Fleegeer, who is finishing service as a math and computer teacher at Moringe Sokoine Secondary School in Tanzania. Pray also for the students at the school, all of whom yearn to learn skills that will help them in life.
21	Pray that the Holy Spirit leads St. John Lutheran Church in Port Clinton, Ohio, as they explore beginning a satellite mission on South Bass Island. This resort island is visited by 1.25 million people each summer. The new ministry would focus on the island's year-round residents—the families who work at the resort and their children.
22	Pray for continued energy for Kaw Prairie Community Church in Kansas City, Missouri, as they grow in discipleship and begin Sunday evening worship services.
23	Give thanks for Pastor Polo Garcia and his wife Marta as they celebrate the recent organization of House of Zion Lutheran Church in Woodburn, Oregon. The congregation was received by the ELCA Oregon Synod in June 2004.
24	Christmas Eve In darkness, you shaped a miracle, Lord. Bring your hope and courage to the churches of southern Africa that are struggling to meet the needs of those suffering from HIV/AIDS, as well as all ELCA mission personnel who work in HIV/AIDS ministries. For candidates now discerning possibilities for service in this area, we ask your guidance.
25	Nativity of our Lord As we thank God for the gift of God's Son, pray for missionary children, who live, learn, and grow in their faith in a variety of settings around the world.
26	<b>Christmas 1</b> <b>Almighty God, we give you thanks for showering your Spirit upon the churches of Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland. May they find continued strength to engage the social, economic, and political challenges within which they witness.</b>
27	Pray for the ministry of Lynn Naumann, who began serving as an administrative assistant for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) this fall. Give thanks for the diversity of gifts that are shared in the companion relationship between the ELCRN and the ELCA Northeastern Iowa, New Jersey, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synods.
28	Thank God for Loretta Carter who is teaching English at Paulinum United Theological Seminary in Windhoek, Namibia. Loretta has the opportunity to advise and guide students at the seminary to strengthen their spiritual journey.
29	Pray that the Holy Spirit guides and inspires Pastor Jillian Ross in the development of the Parroquia Camino de Esperanza, an ELCA Latino ministry in Wapato, Washington.
30	Pray for Pastor Philip and Lou-Marie Knutson who are serving with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA). Philip works as a resource person, advisor and trainer for Christian Education program in ELCSA. He also serves the ELCA Division for Global Mission as regional program assistant for Southern Africa.
31	Give thanks for Pastor Jon Gerdts and Living Water Lutheran Church in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. This congregation formed four years ago, broke ground for their first church building last fall, and hopes to complete the church this spring.

***Prayer Ventures is available electronically. Visit us at [www.elca.org/prayerventures](http://www.elca.org/prayerventures).***



## Annual Bazaar

Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers involved in the Annual Bazaar which raised \$1,476.45 for the Dorcas and Eve Circles. Breakdown:

Bake Sale	\$817.60
White Elephant	\$228.20
Crafts	\$408.18
Kitchen	\$315.90

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans contributed an additional \$1,300 for "Care of Congregations".

This give us a Grand Total of **\$3,069.88!**

**To everyone who supported the Annual Bazaar,  
THANK YOU!!!**

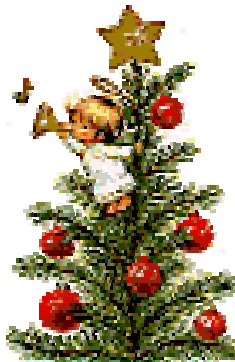
We have a number of members who are Thrivent members, thank you for the additional work required of you to apply for the Thrivent funds.



## Annual St. Nicholas Tree Benefits Muskegon Rescue Mission

Once again members are asked to donate items for area children in need. Pick a paper ornament from the St. Nicholas Tree and bring in items of clothing or toys for the boy/girl and age range listed on the ornament.

The tree will be put up soon and all gifts that will be donated should be given by Sunday, December 19. Gifts will be delivered in time for Christmas.



### Suggested items:

- Warm clothing
- Sweatshirts and sweatpants
- Socks
- Hats
- Mittens
- Underwear
- Long underwear
- Pajamas
- TOYS!



- To Wally Roach and Nancy Gibson for purchasing music for the Choir to use.
- To Tom Whitehead for providing the Bongo drums for the Choir to use.
- To all the Deacons, Lectors, and Acolytes for enriching our service.

## Christmas Poinsettia Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Plants \_\_\_\_\_ (\$9.00 per plant)

Deadline for ordering is December 6

Make checks payable to "Dr. Martin Luther Church"

Please include your payment with your order

You may take your plant home after the Christ-Mass

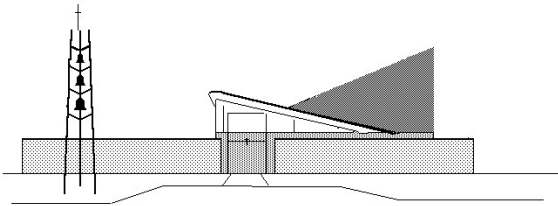
# December 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 <b>Property Committee 7pm</b> <i>St. Andrew, Apostle</i>	2 Bible Study 2pm Bible Study 7pm	3  <i>Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia</i>	4  <b>Men's Club 9am @ Nino's</b>
5 <b>Advent 2</b> Choir Practice 9am Holy Eucharist 10am BIBLE Club 11am	6 <b>Dorcas Circle Luncheon @ Red Lobster 1pm</b>  <i>Nicholas, Bishop of Myra</i>	7  <b>Finance Committee 7pm</b>  <i>Ambrose, Bishop of ...</i>	8	9 Bible Study 2pm Bible Study 7pm	10	11  <i>Lars Olsen Skrefsrud, missionary to India</i>
12 <b>Advent 3</b> Choir Practice 9am Holy Eucharist 10am BIBLE Club 11am	13 <b>Congregation Council 6:30pm</b>	14 <b>Parish Ed 6:30pm</b> <b>Eve Circle 7pm</b>  <i>John of the Cross; Teresa of Avila; re-</i>	15	16 Bible Study 2pm Bible Study 7pm  <i>Las Posadas</i>	17	18
19 <b>Advent 4</b> Choir Practice 9am Holy Eucharist 10am BIBLE Club 11am	20 <b>Worship &amp; Music Committee 7pm</b>	21  <i>St. Thomas, Apostle</i>	22	23 Bible Study 2pm Bible Study 7pm	24 <b>THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD CHRISTMAS EVE</b> Service of Lessons & Carols 7pm	25 <b>THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD CHRISTMAS DAY</b> Christ-Mass 11am
26 <b>Christmas 1</b> Choir Practice 9am Holy Eucharist 10am BIBLE Club 11am  <i>St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr</i>	27 <b>Evangelism Committee 7pm</b>  <i>St. John, Apostle and Evangelist</i>	28  <i>The Holy Innocents, Martyrs</i>	29	30 Bible Study 2pm Bible Study 7pm	31 <b>NEW YEAR'S EVE</b>	Jan 1, 2005 <b>NEW YEAR'S DAY</b>

# The Church Door

The Newsletter of Dr. Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church  
December 2003

## THE SEASONS OF ADVENT and CHRISTMAS



**Dr. Martin Luther Ev. Lutheran Church**  
1860 E. Hile Rd.  
Muskegon, MI 49444

**THE CHURCH DOOR**  
December 2003  
The Seasons of Advent & Christmas

