

News of St. John's Lutheran Church, Grinnell, Iowa

# LOVE LETTER

January 2021

*Know Christ, Love Christ, Share Christ*

## St. John's Lutheran Church

ELCA

1224 East Street  
Grinnell, IA 50112  
(641) 236-4946  
email@stjohnsgrinnell.org  
www.stjohnsgrinnell.org

**The Rev. Daniel Rinehart, pastor**  
pastor@stjohnsgrinnell.org

**Sue Hovenga**  
office assistant

### WORSHIP

on Zoom  
Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday, 8 to 2 pm.  
At other times, leave a message  
at the church office, 236-4946.

### 2020 CHURCH COUNCIL

Sara Hegg Dunne, president  
Linda Masuku, vice president  
Nancy Beck, secretary  
Brad Lindberg, Amy Anderson, Finance  
Donna Beck, Stewardship  
Jordan Esbrook, Faith Formation  
Anita Ford, Jennifer Krohn,  
Evangelism and Shepherding  
Warren Pick, Property  
Candy Wagner, Worship  
Natalie Dunn, Parish Fellowship  
Lamoyne Gaard, Service  
Kerri Olson, Youth

## Muriel's musings.....

As we pass Christmas and move into the New Year I have been pondering the character of Joseph. I have read about his lineage, of the Aaronic and Davidic line, but who was he anyway? Why did he accept the words of an angel in a dream that the child Mary was carrying was from God and denying the norms of his culture, take her to be his wife? Why did he then, in obedience to the edict of the king, travel with her to Bethlehem, home of his ancestry despite her being close to delivering the holy child, to be counted together as a family? After Jesus was born in the stable and magi had come bearing gifts, why did Joseph heed another dream, when an angel told him to flee to Egypt, where his wife and her newborn son could be safe? After that danger passed, why did Joseph heed yet another angelic dream, telling him to return, but this time to Nazareth, a land ruled by a different king, where the family could dwell in safety? It appears Mary saw Gabriel but Joseph had visions in dreams. Who among us would turn our world upside down based on what we thought was an angelic vision in a dream? Did God choose Joseph to raise God's Son because he was faithful to the Jewish prophecies and teachings? Was he chosen because God knew he would be a faithful guardian of Mary and the Son of God? As I said, I have been pondering.

## How We Worship

Worship is on Zoom Sundays at 9:30 am with the meeting room opening at 9:15 am. The Zoom link is sent out on Thursday with the bulletin. If you prefer you can join zoom with a phone call to (312)626-6799, meeting ID#944 6428 8034. We are also on Facebook Live, under Events. Worship videos are also available on YouTube by 12pm each Sunday; please subscribe to our YouTube channel at St. John's Lutheran Church Grinnell Iowa.



### The Uncontrollable Mystery

Sisters and brothers in Christ, may grace and peace abound to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, whose coming in the flesh has been manifested to us and to the world! Amen.

I would like to share with you a short poem by the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats:

The Magi  
Now as at all times I can see in the mind's eye,  
In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale unsatisfied  
ones  
Appear and disappear in the blue depth of the sky  
With all their ancient faces like rain-beaten  
stones,  
And all their helms of silver hovering side by  
side,  
And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once  
more,  
Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,  
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor.

They say that "wise men seek him still." The word used of the so-called "wise men" in the Greek of Matthew's Gospel is *magoi*, which is cognate with our *mage, magic, magician*. It implies knowledge of the occult, but I don't think it would have implied "wisdom" as we understand it to Matthew or his first readers and hearers. Those who are wise in the eyes of the world typically are not lifted up as ideal followers of Jesus. The story of these magi is strange, like many stories of the Bible, and we tend to forget how strange it is because we're so used to it. But why should astrologers from Persia think that a star heralding the birth of the king of the Jews was worth a long journey to pay him homage? What did the King of the Jews have to do with them?

And what does Jesus have to do with us? In the Gospel of Mark that's the first thing anyone says to Jesus as he begins his public ministry. Jesus enters a synagogue and meets a man possessed by a demon, who says: "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God!" (Mark 1:24) The demon knew Jesus and asked him in contempt or in fear what he was doing there. The answer in that case was the end of the demon's power over the man he had been possessing, the end of his residence in that place.

God has come to earth in Jesus. What does that have to do with you? There are common answers that we can speak of: forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. When we bring that question to the specifics of our own lives the answers vary. What demons rule in your life? The Holy One of God has power to cast them out. What gifts do you have to bring? The child born to be King of the Jews invites your homage.

Our salvation was accomplished once and for all in the death of Jesus on Calvary's hill, when the earth shook ("turbulence"). Yet we remain unsatisfied, and must again and again fix our eyes upon this uncontrollable mystery. May God grant us courage to seek, wisdom to find, and vision to see.

Yours in Christ,

*Pastor Rinehart*

The Feast of Epiphany, celebrating the Glory of God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, takes place January 6 (twelve days after Christmas). On this day we remember the magi who were guided by a star to worship the Christ Child. This is a traditional day to ask God's blessing on one's home for the Coming year, and Pastor Rinehart will lead an online Epiphany service of blessing from his own home at 7 p.m., Wednesday, January 6. You are invited to join in blessing your home and to use chalk to join in marking your front door frame as follows:

20+C M B+21

CMB stands for "Christe mansionem benedicat" (Latin for "Christ, bless this house") and for the three traditional names of the magi who came to Bethlehem (Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar). We will use the same Zoom meeting room we use for Sunday worship; there will be a link in the E-Love Letter as well.

Message from Pastor Rinehart



# Happenings at St. John's

## Happy Birthday

**January 8**

Linda Nowasell

**January 11**

Luann Weigel

Frances Pedersen

**January 12**

Armand Junge

**January 13**

Jack Dahlby Albright

**January 14**

Jean Frana

**January 15**

Ted Urfer

**January 19**

Ariana Edsen

**January 20**

John Martinek

**January 21**

Merle Lamb

**January 22**

Valerie Peart

**January 23**

Virginia Ashby

Eugene Peart

**January 24**

Agnes Mikel

Cora Edsen

**January 25**

David Willig

Megan Jensen

**January 26**

Pam Ashing

**January 27**

John Ruchotzke

**January 28**

Bev Cook

**January 29**

James Nowasell

**January 30**

Norm Erickson

## THIS MONTH IN WORSHIP

**January 3**

**Second Sunday of Christmas**

**Jeremiah 31:7-14, Ephesians 1:3-14, John 1:1-18**

*John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.*

**January 10**

**Baptism of Our Lord**

**Genesis 1:1-5, Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:4-11**

*In Ephesus, Paul encounters people who had received John's baptism of repentance but had never heard of the Holy Spirit or of baptism in the name of Jesus. After Paul baptizes them, the Holy Spirit comes upon them and empowers them with gifts of the Spirit.*

**January 17**

**Second Sunday after Epiphany**

**1 Samuel 3:1-10, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, John 1:42-51**

*In John's gospel, Jesus' ministry begins with the call of disciples, who then bring others to Jesus. Philip's friend Nathanael moves from skepticism to faith when he accepts the invitation to "Come and see."*

**January 24**

**Third Sunday after Epiphany**

**Jonah 3:1-5, 10, 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, Mark 1:14-20**

*Before Jesus calls his first disciples, he proclaims a message that becomes known as "the gospel" or good news from God. God is ready to rule our lives. Those who realize this will respond with repentance and faith.*

**January 31**

**Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

**Deuteronomy 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Mark 1:21-28**

*Forces that would bring death and disease have taken hold of a man, yet they recognize Jesus and know what his power means for them. Jesus commands these forces to leave and people are amazed at his authority.*

**Thank you**

I am writing to share a brief update on a number of changes that have occurred since I last worshipped with you. Due to the pandemic, my student teaching was moved from Grinnell-Newburg High School to Wahlert Catholic High School in Dubuque, Iowa. It went very well, and I enjoyed the students and my connections with the other teachers. A regular, full-time offer to teach math and science beginning in January was extended to me following my student teaching, and I accepted it.

As I have said before, my time at St. John's was an important part of my experience at Grinnell College. Thank you again for the special role each of you played. As things get back to normal, I hope to visit and will always have very fond memories of St. John's.

-Katie Mehlretter

**Thank you**

Thank you to all who sent me birthday cards and made phone calls. It was a happy, bright birthday for me during this not-so-bright year. I really appreciate all the good wishes.

-Dale Selix

**Thank you**

Thank you to all who thought of me and my family this Christmas season. All the cards and gifts have been so kind and appreciated.

-Sue, Mary and Laura Hovenga

**Christmas shares**

Thank you to all who purchased, wrapped and contributed gifts for the Poweshiek County Christmas Shares Program this year. Your generosity helped make Christmas brighter for 11 families in our community! Thank you for your generous support!

-Karen Klug-Frischmeyer



**January MICA needs**

Rice & pasta are the suggested items for the MICA food pantry in January. Please take donations directly to MICA at 609 4th Avenue.

**Are you needing Fair Trade coffee?**

Just contact the church office to arrange pickup.

Call 236-4946 or email

[email@stjohnsgrinnell.org](mailto:email@stjohnsgrinnell.org). What's available?

Coffee: Café Salvador \$6.00

Cozy Cup Decaf \$6.75

Toffee Caramel \$6.50

Sister's Blend \$7.00

Fellowship Blend Decaf Percolator \$7.00

Tea: Green Tea \$2.75

Chamomile \$2.75

**And...**

Offerings and correspondence may be left in the church mailbox at any time. It is secure and only accessed by the Pastor or Office Administrator.

**Readers**

Looking ahead into the new year the worship team felt some of you might be willing to read the lessons and/or prayers during worship. Pam Ashing and Donna Beck have agreed to coordinate this and will be contacting you to be part of worship again. Don't hesitate to contact them to volunteer.



# January 2021

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641-236-4946 email@stjohnsgrinnell.org

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 Holy Communion takes place at all worship services except when a Rite of Healing is held.					1	2 5:30 pm Bible Study-Zoom
3 9:30 Worship on Zoom	4	5	6 7:00 pm Feast of Epiphany	7	8	9 5:30 pm Bible Study-Zoom
10 9:30 Worship on Zoom Installation of Pastor Rinehart	11	12 5:00 pm Council mtg-Zoom	13	14	15	16 5:30 pm Bible Study-Zoom
17 9:30 Worship on Zoom	18	19	20 10:30 am Love Letter meeting-Zoom	21	22	23 5:30 pm Bible Study-Zoom
24 9:30 Worship on Zoom	25	26	27	28	29	30 5:30 pm Bible Study-Zoom
31 9:30 Worship on Zoom Semi-annual meeting						

# Love Letter

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The **LOVE LETTER** is published monthly by St. John's Lutheran Church. Deadline for each issue is the 20th of the previous month.  
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Muriel Johannessen, murielj@windstream.net

## Council notes

Council met in regular meeting by Zoom December 8, 2020. Worship continues on Zoom and Facebook live and video is provided after services for anyone who cannot access Zoom or Facebook.

Pastor, Sara , Brad and Amy are determining future computer needs in the Church offices.

Pastor has continued to reach out to congregation by phone calls.

Books have been audited and proposed budget for 2021 has been discussed.

Installation for Pastor Rinehart will take place January 10, 2021 on Zoom. Bishop Current will be performing the service.

## Semiannual meeting

The semiannual congregational meeting will be held after worship on Sunday, January 31. At the meeting, the 2020 finances will be reviewed and the 2021 budget will be presented. A written report including the 2021 budget will be available to the congregation two weeks before the meeting—on January 17. Reports will be in the north entryway to pick up at your convenience.

Reports from the following committees are due in the office by January 11th:

Endowment Committee  
WELCA Committee  
Youth Fund